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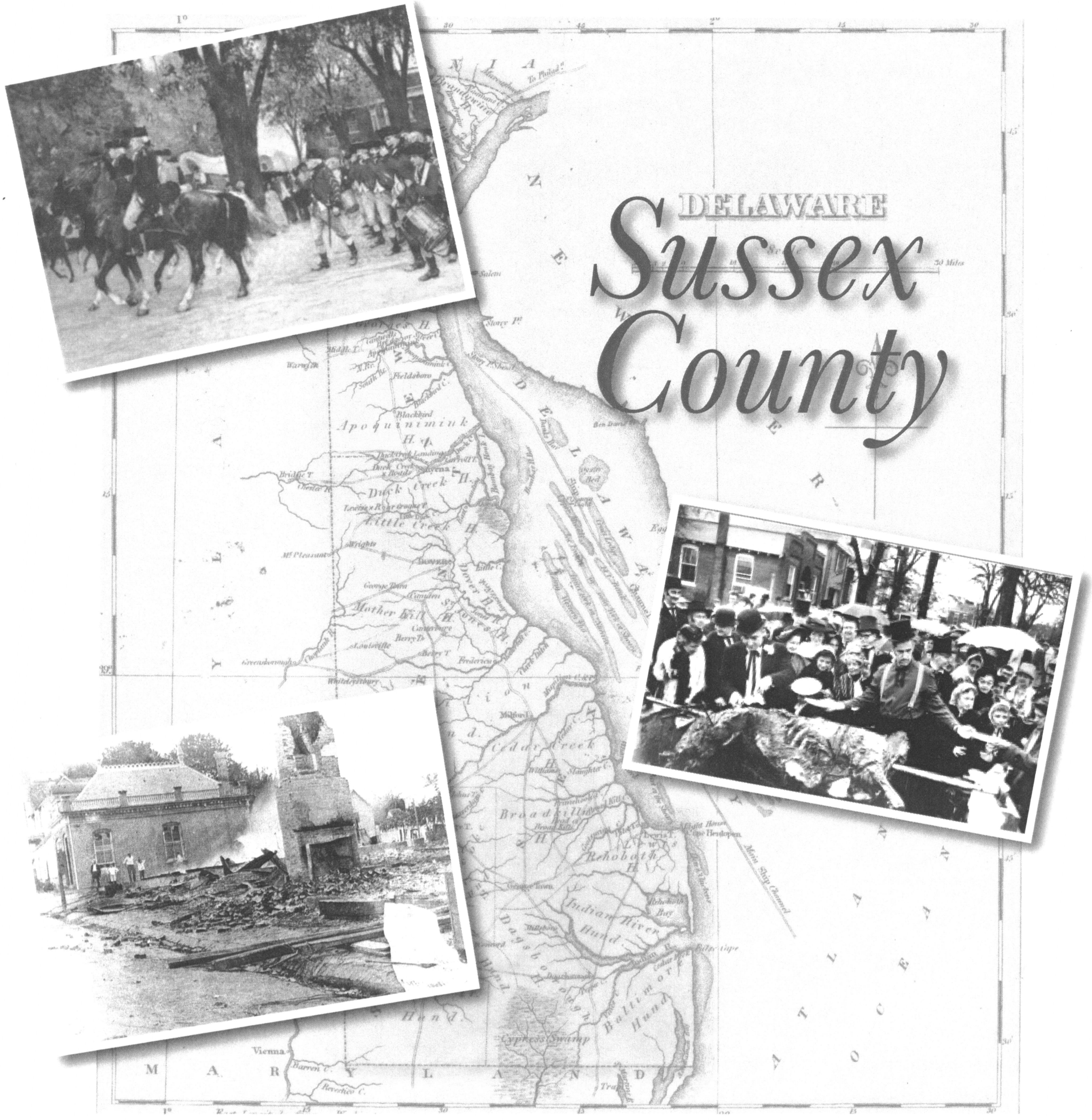
Shoreline

Vol. 20 • June 2013
For the Members of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University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Little Creek H.
Mother Kill H.
Cedar Creek
Broadkill H.
Rehoboth H.
Indian River Hund
Dagsborough Hund
Baltimore Hund
Cypress Swamp
MARYLAND
ATLANTIC OCEAN
30 Miles

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In a Word

By Dr. G. Ray Thompson

This *Shoreline* represents a departure from our usual journal format. For the first time (I believe it's the first time at least), we are doing a *Shoreline* based on one of lower Delmarva's counties. This issue showcases just a few "bits" of history and culture of the geographical area that today is called Sussex County.

For centuries, the borders of Sussex were blurred. Old Somerset County stretched nearly as far north as Dover. Later, many Sussex residents did their legal business in Snow Hill, Worcester County's seat of local government; yet other areas of Sussex were closely tied to Dorchester County; still later, Caroline County and Sussex struggled over common boundaries. Of course, Sussex County was also included within the "Three Lower Counties of Pennsylvania." In this issue we're looking at specific events, being mindful of Sussex County's long history. Our contributors also have provided articles on "unusual" features of Sussex County. We hope you enjoy the offerings in this issue!

On another note, the day is fast approaching when the new Academic Commons will become a reality – the planned opening date is August 2016. President Janet Dudley-Eshbach has worked tirelessly for years to bring this building to fruition. The Nabb Research Center will be sharing quarters with the Blackwell Library and other campus groups in the new Academic Commons facility on main campus. The structure is intended to be the hub of the University community. As the largest building on campus, the Patricia R. Guerrieri Academic Commons will serve as a signature structure, not only for the campus, but for the surrounding community as well.

Finally, we come full circle with a question for our readers. Who is Samuel Sussex? As one rides south on Highway 13, a grey tombstone-like marker in the ditch beside the road bears the name SAMUEL SUSSEX. Who is this mysterious Samuel Sussex? That question is not answered in our *Shoreline*. Perhaps, someone will be spurred to write an article on Samuel for us in a future *Shoreline*. We welcome submissions relating to the history and culture of Delmarva. We hope you enjoy the offerings in this issue!

Submissions

The Nabb Research Center is always interested in articles on the history, culture or heritage of the Delmarva region. If you or anyone you know is interested in writing for *Shoreline*, please send material, proposals, suggestions or comments to the attention of the "Newsletter Editor" as follows:

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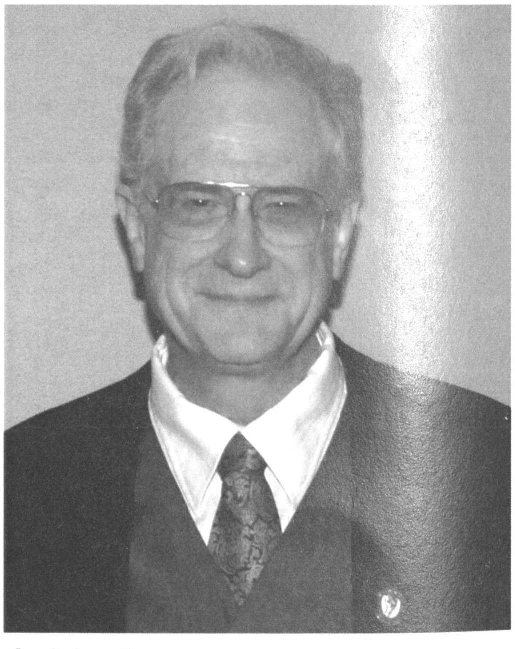
Or by e-mail to rcdhac@salisbury.edu. Please include the words "Newsletter Editor" in the subject line.

Hours & Closings

READING ROOM HOURS:
Monday: 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Tuesday-Friday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

GALLERY HOURS:
Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 1-4 p.m.
or by appointment (please call 410-543-6312).

CLOSINGS:
The Nabb Research Center will be closed July 4, September 2, November 27-29, December 23-January 1.



Dr. G. Ray Thompson

Shoreline

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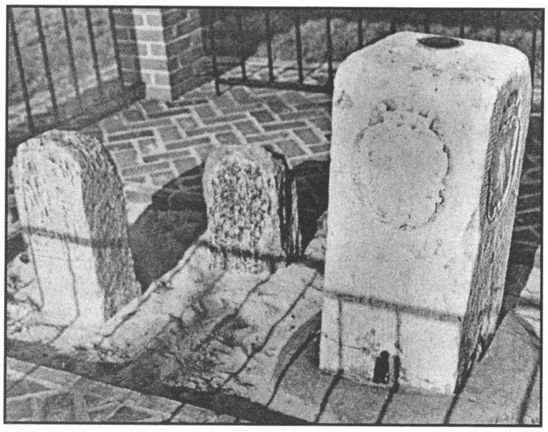

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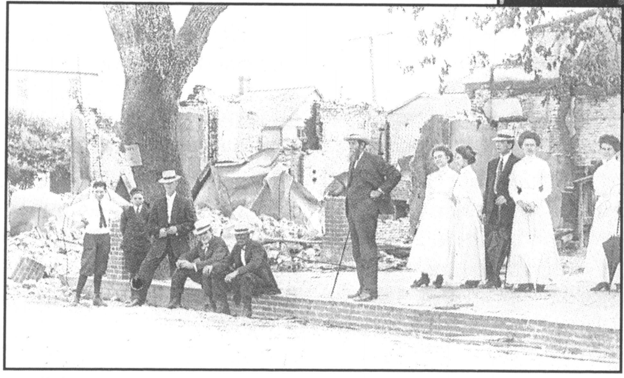
Eventide in Old Somerset



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Milton's Disastrous Fire of 1909

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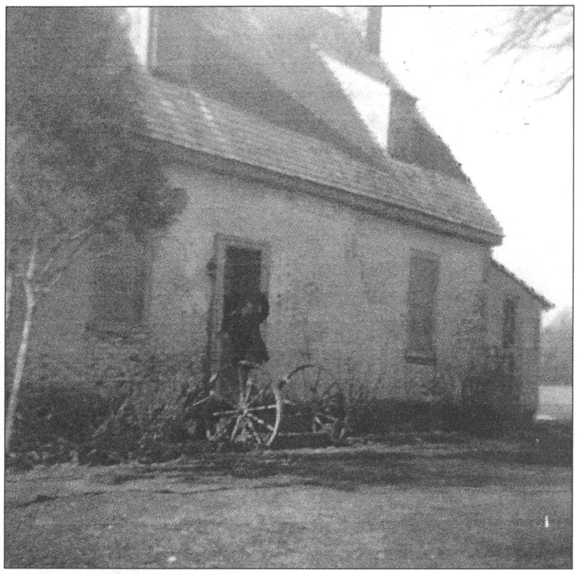
Background map is from the *Geographical, Historical, and Statistical Map Of Delaware*. Delaware. No. 19. Drawn by F. Lucas Jr. Engraved by Young & Delleker. 1822. Nabb Center Collection.

The Cannon Family Tames the Wilderness

By Dan Parsons



The Cannon Maston house, pictured here c. 1920, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 and it is part of the Western Sussex Byway. It reflects the architectural traditions of an early Chesapeake Bay region brick plantation house.

When James Cannon settled in Dorchester County, MD, approximately 500 settlers had already taken up residence in the area, in contrast to the 300 tithables who had been listed only eight years previously. These families were clearing timber and making room for small farms with modest, earthen-built dwellings. Settlers were moving up the Chesapeake Bay tributaries, and by 1660, the headwaters of the Nanticoke River were the new frontier. In the 1670s, the first permanent settlement developed. James Cannon was one of the first pioneers to settle on the upper Nanticoke. He was associated with many of the early traders who commingled with the native population, including the Nutter family, as well as Maryland surveyor Francis Jenkins.

Dorchester County, formed in 1668, originally included all the land between the Choptank and Nanticoke rivers and the area of "New Sweden" – much of what would later become Delaware. When Cannon settled there in 1688, the area was primarily populated by Native Americans. To the south, the Eastern Shore of Virginia had forced its Quakers north into Maryland. Social tensions were high; decades of political upheaval in England had only recently come to an end. Pioneers were very concerned about political and religious beliefs. In spite of the turmoil, a distinct society emerged in Dorchester County – one that was characterized by social and political strife.

Although initial contact with Native Americans was amicable, war was declared on the Nanticokes on several occasions as settlers encroached farther into the Natives' hunting grounds. By 1697, the Nanticoke Indians claimed to have ten towns in a territory that extended as far north as Laurel, DE, and as far south as modern-day Salisbury. The fur trade in Dorchester was thriving for Maryland's Lord Proprietor well into the 1660s; however, it was dying by the time James Cannon made his way up the Nanticoke.

The location where James Cannon initially settled when he came to the Chesapeake area is uncertain. Regretfully, as a result of an 1851 courthouse fire in Cambridge, MD, many of the early records of Dorchester were lost. Cannon appears to have been a man of middling means, establishing tracts of land totaling several hundred acres before his death in 1711. The first Cannons in Colonial Maryland records appear in St. Mary's County in 1670; however, it is unclear whether this Cannon family was directly connected to James Cannon. What is clear is that Cannon and his heirs enjoyed modest prosperity in a sparsely settled area. The scant records of Cannon's life in Dorchester that do exist can be found in deed records and probate, with references to him in a few Somerset records as well.

The life of James can be pieced together by reviewing the probate inventory of his estate. He was clearly involved in cottage industries such as tailoring; he had eight linen and woolen wheels, a wool card, 20 pounds of raw wool, bolts of different types of cloth, 12 dozen various buttons, eight gold men's coats, and hanks of mohair.

He may have also been a carpenter and a shoemaker. At his death, he had 100 feet of inch-thick pine planks, 32 cuts of cypress and 1,300 nails, as well as 10 tanned cow skins, 16 deer skins and seven pair of men's and women's shoes. All of this is in addition to farm work revealed by a cache of over 7,000 pounds of tobacco, 23 cattle, 20 horses, 19 sheep and 21 swine. The Cannon kitchen was well stocked with a number of pots, frying pans and a grid iron; however, no dishes were recorded except for one knife and fork. The household was also comfortably furnished with seven beds.

He was at least sufficiently literate since he signed his will, possessed a pair of spectacles and owned a parcel of books. Books and literacy suggest a continuing interest in education; the inventories of his sons' estates – James, Thomas, William, Henry, John and Matthew – contained books as well.

James thrived by the Nanticoke River. He owned two canoes and a scow, along with fishnets and barrels of salted fish. Originally built by the native tribes along the Chesapeake Bay, dugout canoes were adopted by early English settlers who discovered that the sturdy craft could handle the rough waters of the Bay while carrying a heavy load. They were made from huge logs from loblolly pine or tulip poplar trees; the log was slowly burned then the ashes were scraped from inside. The English settlers added a sail to the canoe, increasing its speed. Depending on the size of the tree, a canoe could be 30-feet long and up to 5-feet wide. James used his to reach the upper headwaters of the Nanticoke in 1696 when he patented Ickford.

James Cannon, his wife Mary and their 11 children did all their various chores without the assistance of slaves or indentured servants, since slavery had not yet dominated their region. However, within a generation, James' children embraced slavery. At the time of their deaths, Cannon's son Henry had one slave, Thomas had two, James had three and William owned 11.

James Cannon planted the seeds, through his children and their children, for his extended family to become one of the most prominent in the area. He became a relatively wealthy and respected member of the newly formed county of Dorchester, being named Justice and Commissioner, as well serving as a witness to many court transactions. Being a Justice was a position of great importance and power. In his *History of Dorchester*, Elias Jones writes that a Justice had an array of responsibilities during this period; they were "good and lawful men to enquire of all manners of felonies, witchcraft, inchantments [sic], sorceries, magic arts, treapasses [sic], forestallings, engrossings and extortions whatsoever."

1727 brick at Cannon Maston house.

James Cannon was the original patentee of the tract called Cannon's Regulation, the site of the Woodland Ferry, west of Seaford. He patented Cannon's Noble Quarter, the site of the former DuPont Nylon Plant. Most significantly, he patented Ickford – where a Maryland parlor house constructed by his son Thomas in 1727 still stands. James Cannon may have purchased this particular property due to the presence of Native Americans in the area who were interested in trade, as well as an existing fording point across Buck's Branch, shown on period maps as "Buck Crossing Over." Cannon's inventory contains evidence of interactions with local Native Americans, relating to items such as pottery and deer hides.

Records indicate that after James' patent, two of his sons established a mill at the site on the tributary, and that once his son Thomas inherited the land, he began preparing materials to build a permanent homestead. Thomas and his wife Catherine Smith Cannon constructed a one-room, brick dwelling in 1727 and built an addition in 1733. The couple, along with Thomas' brother Mathew, commemorated the construction of the house by marking a brick near the southeast door with their initials TC, CSC and MC. Thomas and Catherine Cannon occupied the dwelling together with their growing family until Thomas' death in 1747.

In 2009, architectural historians from the University of Delaware, guided by Dr. Rebecca Sheppard, conducted an architectural analysis of the 1727 Maryland parlor house outside of Seaford, the last such remaining structure in Delaware. Subsequently, another architectural historian, Michael Bourne, discovered portions of the paneled wall aside and above the fireplace in the parlor. While converting the structure to a rental in the 1820s, and remodeling to add plaster, artisans split the large wall's framing and used it as nailing strips for the lathe in the ceiling. Truly a great find, but more so evidence of the scarcity of finished materials.

The University of Delaware architectural historians' report illustrates that the room built in 1733, now known as the Cannon-Maston House, incorporated a gable entry with a beaded and pinned frame. The location of the door in the gable of the 1733 addition suggests access to a service wing that may have directly abutted the main block, was connected by a hyphen or may have simply stood nearby in a domestic yard.

By 1747, Thomas and Catherine had at least eight children – Thomas, James, Joseph, Absolom, Stephen, Lowder, Levi and Sarah – several of whom were still under the age of 18. Thus, the dwelling housed at least 10 people in the attic and the two rooms on the first floor. Thomas' inventory supports this number, listing at least six beds, three of which were described as "high" bedsteads. It is likely that the beds were spread among all of these spaces, with perhaps the smaller downstairs room set aside for the use of the married couple and any infant children. The inventory also contains a large cluster of kitchen-related items, ranging from cooking utensils and dishes, spices and food supplies, to tables and chairs, also suggesting that these items were located in a single place, probably the separate kitchen. The listing of substantial amounts of meat, especially bacon and pork, points to a smokehouse used for processing and storing meat.

Slaves typically slept in spaces separate from their masters, ranging from formal slave quarters, to kitchen lofts, to corners in outbuildings. At the Cannon Farm, the two male slaves most likely occupied the attic space above the separate kitchen.

The inventories taken at the time of Thomas' and Catherine's deaths in 1747 and 1768 respectively reveal some details of life on the Cannon farm in the early to mid-18th century. Both inventories enumerate the assets of a wealthy family, including extensive livestock holdings, fine furniture, silver and pewter.

Thomas' livestock holdings clearly placed him among the wealthy elite: eight cows, 11 calves and yearlings, two steers, and two bulls provided an abundance of milk and meat for the household. Pigs provided another source of meat, indicated by more than 20 live animals and 13 pounds of bacon. Two yokes of oxen provided the power for plowing and hauling, but Thomas also owned five horses that could provide more efficient plowing forces as well as transportation. These numbers were far beyond the amount needed for subsistence.

A flock of 10 sheep were most likely raised for their valuable fleeces. Some of these livestock, especially the horses, required shelter from extreme weather, suggesting the presence of a barn or stable. Cows, pigs and sheep likely grazed all over the property, with fencing protecting more vulnerable and valuable crops. Crops grown on the property included tobacco (as a cash crop), corn (as feed for the animals and grain for the household) and flax (for textile production). Both tobacco and corn were generally planted in small fields and were possibly rotated to protect the fertility of the soil. A corncrib would provide storage for the corn crop and a barn was required for the curing and storage of tobacco before sale. Agricultural tools were simple, including plows, harrows and axes, but Thomas also possessed basic carpenter and shoemaker tools.

Textile production offered another economic opportunity for the household. Thomas and Catherine produced flax and wool on the farm and then processed it into thread and cloth. Both inventories contained a loom and tackling, multiple spinning wheels, processing tools such as wool cards and flax hackles, and a variety of yarn and thread. Since most of these goods remained with Catherine after her husband's death, including the loom, it is likely that textile production was an area she controlled, from processing the raw materials to producing finished cloth. It is unclear where these activities occurred on the property, but it was most likely in the house. Family members consumed a significant portion of the textile material Catherine produced, such as clothing and household linens. However, in the latter part of her life, she produced them with the help of her grown daughter, daughters-in-law, female slaves and other servants; she could have generated a surplus for the textile market.

Most households produced their own clothing, but in some areas, families also focused on the production of raw materials and finished thread or cloth. This was particularly true in Sussex County, where many household inventories included not only the spinning wheels found in almost all homes, but also more complex looms used for cloth production. The home manufacturing of textiles for the market was part of the diversified approach to agriculture practiced by many Sussex County farmers to compensate for the limitations caused by sandy soil.

In this time period, farm complexes in southern Delaware typically contained small timber-framed dwellings surrounded by a loose cluster of small log or frame outbuildings, including barns, corncribs, granaries, kitchens and smokehouses. Although we have no direct evidence of the specific buildings on the Cannon Farm, the probate inventories provide some clues.

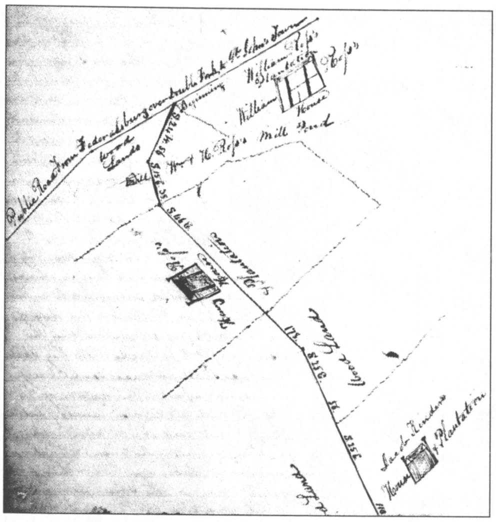
The pioneers who led the settlement of the Nanticoke left a lasting legacy. James Cannon's legacy includes the Woodland Ferry and the Maryland Parlor House built by his son Thomas at Ickford. Extraordinary for its time, today it stands as a testament to the settlers' efforts in taming the wilderness. While most of the settlers of that primitive time lived in earthen-built structures with large clay fireplaces and "riven sticks of wood," the Cannons constructed houses of finely made brick, produced by highly skilled artisans who created structures that have lasted for almost 300 years.

By the time James Cannon's life ended, a prosperous family was established that would become part of the elite planter class. Wealth was relative, with even the more prosperous having limited amenities, but James Cannon was the archetypal Colonial frontiersman, making his way up a river to find fortune for himself and his heirs.

As heritage tourism initiatives continue, more connections will be made with the Cannons and other families of the region. Dan Parsons is the historic preservation planner/records manager for Sussex County and a member of the Nabb Board of Directors.

Sussex Highway System

By Bill Collison


Public Road from Federalsburg over Double Fork to St Johns Town
Beginning
William Ross's Plantation
William House
Mill Pond
Wood Lands
Wood Land
Plantation

"From Ross' Saw Mill in Marshyhope to the farm on which Robert Richards neg.[ro] lives." (Roads in North West Fork Hundred) Sussex County Court of General Sessions Road Books 1823-1841; p. 225 (1837)

The roads in Sussex County provide an interesting chronology. The first roads created in this location were sparse since most inland sections of the county were unsettled and the preferred method of travel was by water. Instead, early roads were crude Indian paths and animal trails.

The first legislation regarding public highway maintenance was initiated by the Dutch administration in 1656 as a result of free-ranged animals destroying roads. The ordinance was passed primarily to control these stray animals. By 1664, by the authority of the Duke of York, warrants were issued for road laborers, who were responsible to the constables and at least two assistant overseers; they were the first road commissioners. Road laborers worked up to one week each year and were compensated solely based on work performance.

In 1682, William Penn transferred the authority of road maintenance from the Governor to the Provincial Council. The overseers were given permission by the County Court to issue a summons for road construction to inhabitants. A penalty of five pounds was levied for refusal to perform work.

An act passed in 1796 authorized the construction of several roads in Sussex County, primarily leading from Georgetown to points around the county. The roads were to be 40 feet wide with the "cleared" part being 30 feet.

The preamble of a 1797 law empowered the Justices of the Peace for each Court of General Sessions to order road layout. The court appointed overseers to purchase trees, build bridges and collect taxes. Roads were to be laid causing the least inconvenience or injury to the property owners. Residents who desired a road filed a petition with the Levy Court, which, after the court approved it, was sent to the Court Of General Sessions. Commissioners were appointed to evaluate the need for the petitioned roads. If a road was determined necessary, the court accepted the project, and it was funded by the government.

Prior to 1775, much of Sussex County was within the borders of the Maryland counties of Dorchester, Caroline, Worcester and Somerset. In 1666, the first Maryland road law was passed by the Colonial Assembly, requiring County Commissioners to lay out a road system, which would make the heads of rivers and creeks passable by horse and feet. The act, similar to the Delaware act, provided overseers and taxation authority.

In 1704, the Maryland Provincial Assembly passed a law that required the hacking of directional signs on trees using an axe blade. It stated that roads leading to churches or county courthouses "shall be marked on both sides of the road with two notches" while roads leading to a ferry "shall be marked with three notches." Maryland landowners were also required to furnish male servants for road work.

Contained within the Nabb Center's vast microfilm collection are seven rolls titled "Sussex County Court of General Sessions, Road Books 1763-1917." Prior to 1793, the road surveys were disorganized loose papers; after 1793, surveys were entered into books and indexed by the various hundreds. These surveys contain a wealth of information for historians and genealogists.

For example, the following description is of an 1837 road survey in Northwest Fork Hundred of contemporary Trinity Church Road. A petition was submitted to the Court of General Sessions of the Peace and the Jail of Sussex County by Jacob Kinder Jr., Lewis N. Wright, William Ross, Wesley Smith, Zachariah Hatfield, Josiah Cannon, William Neal, Andrew Stafford, Edward Richards, Jonathan Twiford, John Jones, John H. Jefferson, A.P. Gordon, Jacob Kinder, Waitman Jones, Frisby Hosby, John R. Sudler, William Cannon and Stansbury Jacobs. The court then appointed Elijah Cannon, Clement Layton, Nathaniel Horsey, Curtis Jacobs and Roger Adams, as the "five judicious and impartial freeholders of the county to view the premises and determine concerning the same."

The five freeholders, with the assistance of surveyor Thomas Jacobs, returned their findings to the court, which specified that a new road was necessary. The new road began at a "point northwardly of the north end of William and Henry Ross's sawmill in the old public road leading from Federalsburg over Double Fork to St. Johnstown." It passed through or bounded the plantations of William Ross, Henry Ross, Jacob Kinder, Lewis N. Wright, Edward Richards and Robert Richards (Negro). These landowners were assessed for resulting damages caused by the new road since it passed through their land. They were awarded six cents each, with the exception of Robert Richards, who was a tenant. Factual renditions of the plantation dwellings and structures are depicted in the survey.

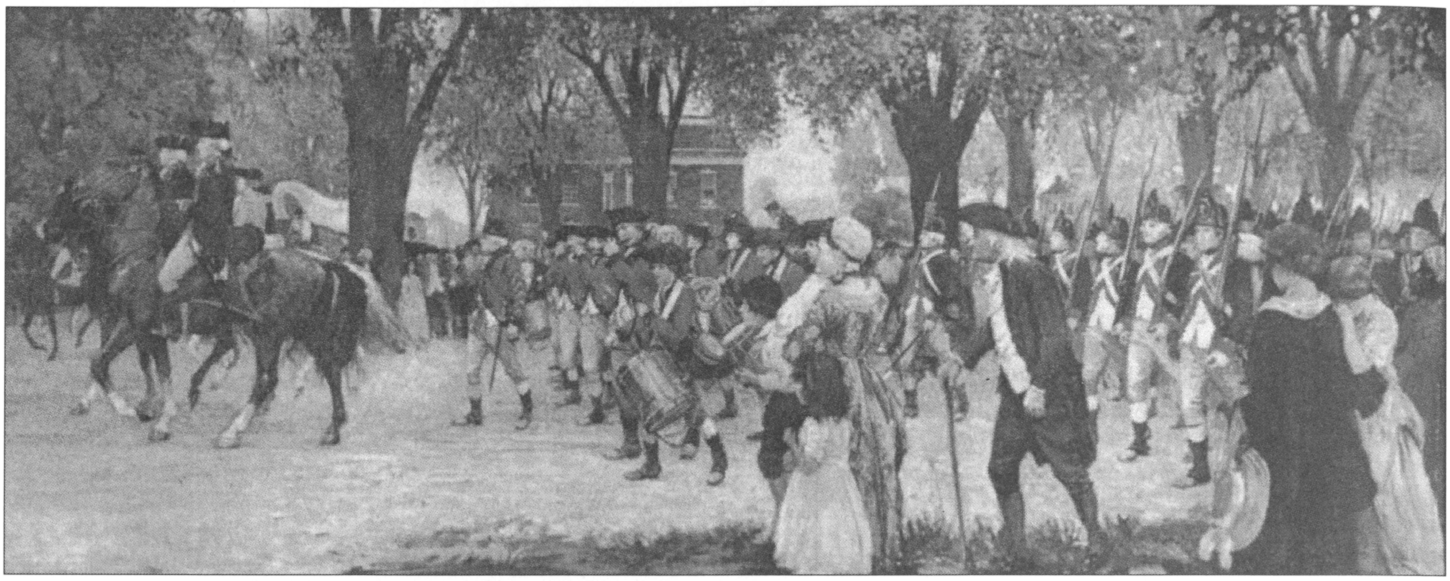
The contemporary Trinity Church Road is exactly as the 1837 survey portrayed, with the slight exception of the crossing of Ross's sawmill dam, which no longer exists. Using Deed Mapper software it is possible to plot the original surveys and prove that the roads in use today are often two centuries old. In 1935, the State Highway Department was charged with the responsibility of public roads, including taxation.

Patrons are encouraged to view these road survey microfilm rolls and discover the formation of the highway system. One can only imagine the extensive information that can be found.

Bill Collison, a long-time Nabb supporter and volunteer, is an avid researcher of local history.

Sussex County and the Coming of the Revolution

By Richard B. Carter



"Delaware Troops Leaving the Green." 1915 painting by Stanley Arthurs. (Original painting in Delaware Public Archives.)

As the author of The History of Sussex County, *former director of historic preservation for Sussex County Government and author of the following article, it is safe to say that Richard B. Carter has a true understanding for the people and events that made this area of Delaware what it is today. In "Sussex County and the Coming of the Revolution," Carter uncovers a common misconception and pivotal moment for this Eastern Shore community.*

Life in Sussex County and the surrounding peninsula has had about it, since time immemorial, an air of strict, rock-ribbed conservatism that might be said to be the very essence of the American revolutionary era as it was known on Delmarva. One might reasonably conclude, after more than 200 years of tales about the founding fathers and their revolutionary spirit, that the inhabitants of all 13 colonies were solidly committed to the fight for independence – such an assumption would be a mistake.

It has been variously estimated that anywhere from half to four-fifths of the 14,000 residents of Sussex County in 1776 were loyalists, committed – if not absolutely to the king – to a very cautious approach to the movement toward independence from Great Britain. For generations after the war, this inconvenient fact tended to be ignored as many fictionalized that all their forebears had been ardent patriots in the fight against British repression. It was not, in fact, until well into the 20th century that the full magnitude of southern Delaware's loyalist resistance was fully acknowledged due to the efforts of historians like Harold Bell Hancock, a Dover native who went on to a distinguished academic career at Ohio's Otterbein College, publishing groundbreaking works on the Delaware loyalists along the way.

There is little doubt that the cause of independence ran away with many Sussex Countians in 1775 and 1776. During those years, events in the colonies proceeded at a speed foreign to the leisurely pace of existence that had ruled Delmarva for upward of a century. In the years before the revolution, Sussex County and its neighboring counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore were very English, agrarian, isolated and overwhelmingly conservative. The people were rooted to the soil and viewed themselves as Englishmen.

They were, in the years that followed, forced to conceive of themselves in an entirely new – revolutionary – way. It has often been observed that tumultuous changes in society force conventional views to the extremes on the political scale. So it was for Sussex in the years before and after that day in 1776 when the brave, impassioned and all-too-puny Continental Congress declared that the 13 American colonies along the Eastern Seaboard were free from the bonds tying them to the mother country, Great Britain.

Before 1776, the Delaware colony had encompassed representatives of every political stripe, from very conservative to extreme liberal. The conservatives, known as "Tories" in the parlance of the day, made up the majority in the lower two counties, while the more liberal "Whigs" generally controlled events in New Castle County – not entirely unlike things in Delaware today. There were several reasons for the presence of strong Tory elements in Sussex. Following early settlement by the Dutch and other nationalities, English settlers had gradually migrated to the area from other parts of the peninsula after the English, under the Duke of York (later King James II), had wrested control away from the Dutch in the 1660s and 1670s. By 1775, an overwhelming majority of the 14,000 residents of the county were of English origin.

In the early 1770s, the precise legal status of much of what is today western and southern Sussex County remained confused in the minds of many Sussex Countians. William Penn and his heirs, proprietors of the province of Pennsylvania and "the Three Lower Counties upon Delaware," had been involved in a boundary dispute with the Calvert family, the Lords Baltimore, proprietors of Maryland, for the better part of a century. Though these boundaries had finally been settled and established by the Transpeninsular and Mason-Dixon surveys in the decades before the Revolution, the changes had yet to be fully implemented.

Along with the English heritage of most Sussex Countians, came a fairly widespread adherence to the tenets of the Church of England. Although there were, in fact, more Presbyterian churches in the county by the outbreak of the war, Presbyterianism was still a relatively new development. The Anglicans continued to hold a considerable numerical edge, though relatively few actually practiced the religion on a regular basis, due to a perennial shortage of ordained ministers. Many historians have pointed out that while the Presbyterians tended to be favorably disposed to the fight for independence, in part because of a preponderance of Scotch-Irish among their number, the Anglicans were more supportive of the British crown, as the established church in England and many of her domains.

The Quakers were also represented in the religious life of Sussex in 1776, with three meeting houses in the county: Cool Spring near Lewes, Marshy Hope Creek in northwestern Sussex and Cedar Creek in the northeastern part of the county. The Quakers, who espoused pacifism, generally sought to avoid active involvement in the armed struggle that was to follow. Therefore, they were seen by some of the more radical Whigs as Tory sympathizers, though this was often not the case.

In the decades immediately preceding the revolution, the peninsula was in a state of religious ferment. The beginnings of Methodism in the 1770s and 1780s were already beginning to be felt through the visits of stirring preachers like George Whitefield, an ordained Anglican minister, who was an early exponent of concepts that later evolved into Methodism. Also active in those years was native-born Kent County, DE, farmer Joseph Nichols, who early on espoused a Quaker-like style of religion that eventually evolved into an essentially new sect, whose adherents came to be known as "Nicholites."

Suffice it to say that in the Sussex County and Delmarva areas of 1776, religion played a large part in daily life despite the shortage of clergy. Among the only educated persons in an area, ministers strongly influenced the political as well as religious opinions of their congregations. In some respects, the war for independence took on the appearance of a religious struggle in southern Delaware before it was over.

Another factor contributing to the conservative outlook of most Sussex Countians was the county's isolation and overwhelmingly rural character. In an era when the primary means of transportation were boats and bad roads, Delmarva was removed from the great thoroughfares of inter-Colonial commerce. Most of the county's contact with the outside world came from the ships, many of them English, that stopped at Lewes or from the smaller coastal trading vessels that plied the navigable rivers and creeks on both sides of the county.

Sussex had no newspapers of its own; there were none anywhere in the lower three counties, for that matter. Those printed in Philadelphia were generally inadequate in their coverage of Delaware events.

As proprietary colonies, both Delaware and Maryland were spared much of the machinery of royal government. The harsh dictates meted out to residents of royal colonies like New York, Massachusetts and Virginia were largely absent from life on Delmarva. By comparison, the Penns of Delaware and Pennsylvania were mild in their conduct of government, and most public officials, except for the highest echelons of Colonial government, were native Delawareans and Pennsylvanians. Thus, while the populace of Sussex did generally support the sanctions taken by the early Continental Congress against England in response to such measures as the Stamp Act, they stopped short of calling for outright independence, lacking much of the impetus that drove other areas to take more radical stands.

New Castle County, located near Philadelphia and known for its large Scotch-Irish representation, early industry and strong Presbyterian outlook, was generally Whig and therefore much more supportive of the movement toward independence. Support started to waver in Sussex and Kent when talk in Congress and throughout the colonies began to move more and more toward a complete break with England, but by then it was too late for the loyalists of Sussex to turn events around.

The role of Sussex and Kent county loyalists during the Revolution continued to be regularly downplayed until the 1940 publication of Hancock's monograph *The Delaware Loyalists*. He later expanded on this theme in his 1976 book *The Loyalists of Revolutionary Delaware*. While the presence of such prominent patriot leaders as Col. David Hall, river and bay pilot Henry Fisher, Presbyterian minister Matthew Wilson of Lewes, Gen. John Dagworthy, Col. Simon Kollock, Col. John Jones of Dagsborough Hundred, Col. Joseph Vaughn and Col. Nathaniel Mitchell of Broad Creek Hundred serves as evidence of a body of patriotic sentiment in Sussex, staunch pro-independence elements were in the minority. In his 1976 book, Hancock notes that "in 1780 John Adams, a revolutionary leader from Massachusetts, wrote that there are 'in this little State from various causes, more tories in proportion than any other.'"

The loyalist stand taken by Sussex Countians was entirely logical when taking into account the time period. In many cases, county residents displayed as much courage and resolve defending their status as Englishmen loyal to the crown as their pro-independence opponents showed in the opposite direction. Generations of emphasis on the founding fathers' achievements caused many important aspects of the struggle to be swept under the rug of history.

For the people of Sussex in the 1770s and in the years that followed, the struggle was all too real. It was a time of confusion and terror, a time when the established patterns of generations began quivering and falling into ruins about the feet of the men and women whose lives had been governed by those patterns. It was a time when men of the greatest authority and leadership in the county suddenly found themselves outlaws, their views declared illegal, while those they had considered dangerous radicals, led the colonies toward what they believed was the wildest sort of folly.

* * *

In October 1773, the Delaware Assembly established the colony's first Committee of Correspondence and Communication with the Other Colonies in an effort to remain in contact with similar movements throughout the colonies. Its members, all assemblymen, were George Read, Thomas McKean and Dr. John McKinly of New Castle County, Caesar Rodney of Kent, and Thomas Robinson of Sussex. Even then, the political makeup of the assembly was mostly conservative, with only two of the five, Rodney and McKean, strongly in favor of independence. Read and McKinly were, at best, moderates, who in the years to come supported the patriot cause, but never without reservation. The fifth, Sussex Countian Thomas Robinson of Indian River Hundred, later became Delaware's most notorious loyalist.

An examination of the gradual shift from responsible opposition to "the repressive dictates" by the British government to outright rebellion reveals many curious alignments. For instance, early in 1774, meetings were held in each county to discuss the growing struggles and need for a general continental congress. Among the resolutions passed by the Sussex meeting held in Lewistown on July 23 was the most radical official utterance yet made by Delawareans. It resolved "that it is the inherent right of British subjects to be taxed by their own consent, or by the Representatives chosen by themselves only; and that every act of the British Parliament respecting the internal police of North America is unconstitutional, and an invasion of our just rights and liberties."

At the same time, the Sussex Countians reaffirmed that "the inhabitants of this county do owe and will pay allegiance to his majesty King George III." A committee was appointed at this meeting to meet the following month with similar bodies from Kent and New Castle to choose delegates to the first Continental Congress. It included Thomas Robinson, Levin Crapper, Boaz Manlove, Benjamin Burton, John Wiltbank, Stephen Townsend, David Hall, Rev. Matthew Wilson, Jacob Moore, John Clowes, Daniel Nunez, John Rodney and William Peery. Four years later, Robinson and Manlove, both assemblymen and respected politicians in 1774, had been forced to flee Delaware, their property confiscated and their lives in ruin. Hall, Moore, Rodney and Peery went on to become Continental officers, and after returning from the war, Hall ultimately became an early governor of Delaware.

The first congress met in September 1774 at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia. The delegates from Delaware were Caesar Rodney, Thomas McKean and George Read. Among the measures adopted were "non-importation, non-consumption and non-exportation" agreements, which dissolved all commercial agreements with Great Britain after December 1, 1774, unless Parliament acted to lift the repressive measures. In the spring of 1775, the Continental Congress took another step toward the ultimate break when its members deemed it necessary to establish a military force for the protection of the colonies. Shortly thereafter, the Delaware assembly agreed to bear Delaware's share of the expenses involved.

Soon, a group of staunch patriots in what is today western and southwestern Sussex County – an area then still officially in limbo between "Old Sussex" and the neighboring colony of Maryland – met with the intention of establishing a separate county of western Sussex. In his *History of Delaware, 1609-1888*, J. Thomas Scharf writes that "following the chronological order of events, mention should be made ... of the project to organize a fourth county in Delaware." The committee having the plan in charge, held a meeting at a location oddly referred to by modern terminology as "Broad Creek, Head of Indian River." While Broad Creek is known as the major tributary of the Nanticoke River, running up through what is today the town of Laurel, the reference to "Head of Indian River" suggests that the meeting may have taken place in what is now Dagsboro, particularly given the fact that the town's most prominent citizen John Dagworthy was in attendance. Although those present were not represented in the Delaware General Assembly, they had faith in the Continental Congress to support all its measures. Their resolution added: "And further to support the union of the Colonies on which, under God, our safety depends, we unanimously resolve that John Dagworthy, John Jones, John Tennant, John Collins, Simon Kollock, Wm. Holland, Samuel Slosse, Joshua Polk, Clement Bayley, Wm. Polk, John Mitchell, Peter Hubbard and Elijah Cannon be appointed to a committee to meet and correspond with other committees of this and the other governments." The resolution also included this language:

> "... In this new County military preparations for self-defense against the bloody attacks of the infatuated British ministry are carried on with great spirit. It is expected we shall soon have fifteen hundred or more of a well-trained militia; and the committee are endeavoring to obtain the necessary supplies of warlike stores."
>
> *(American Archives Series 4, Volume 2,* Page 1,032*)*

While the final boundary between the colonies of Delaware and Maryland was not formally approved in the Delaware Assembly until October of 1775, the line on which it was based had been run more than a decade earlier by the English surveyors Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon. It is an interesting commentary on the power of the seemingly interminable boundary conflict that as late as June 1775, men from southern and western Sussex should still be so vague as to their proper legal status.

Even though the plan for a fourth county was never implemented, the committee's resolutions came at a good time for the embattled Whigs of lower Delaware. As the actions of Congress moved the colonies closer to the momentous decision made on July 4, 1776, a conservative backlash was occurring among the Tories of Sussex. Thomas Robinson, the well-known Indian River Hundred farmer, Anglican vestryman, storekeeper and assemblyman, was then Sussex County's most influential politician. He had been involved in the highest councils of Colonial government even while his loyalist views were clearly known. It is possible that Robinson became more outspoken as the course of the colonies' progression toward independence became clearer to him. Or possibly, Robinson had always spoken his mind and it had simply taken time for the increasingly radical Whigs of the area to feel confident enough to oppose him. The best account of this crucial chapter in the county's history is found in Hancock's *The Loyalists of Revolutionary Delaware*.

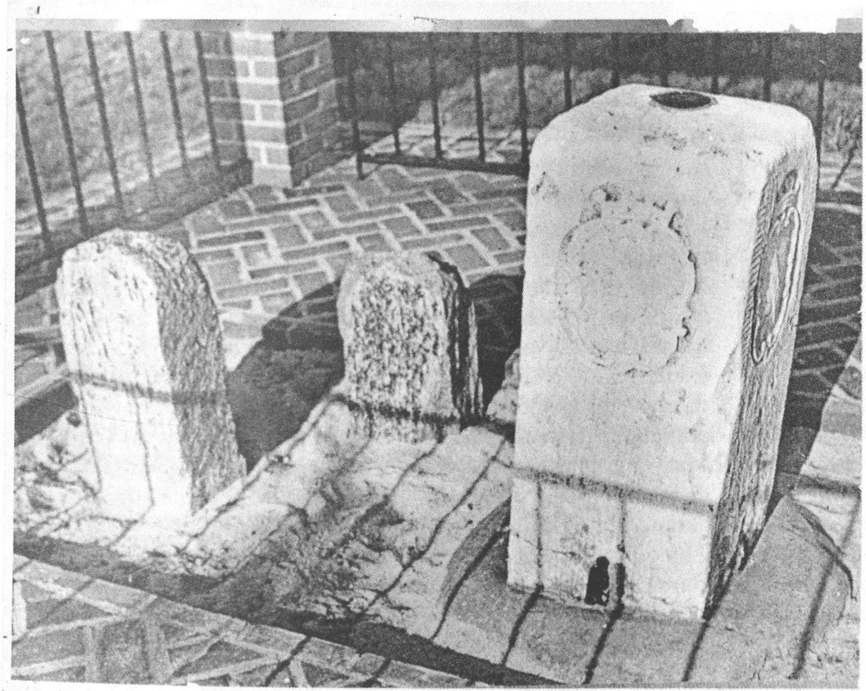
Hancock writes that at some point, probably in late 1774, there was established in Sussex, as in the other Delaware counties, a "committee of inspection and observation," which functioned in conjunction with the committee of correspondence to suppress dissent and control the activities of those who sought to undermine the movement of opposition against Parliament. After some prodding, the committee of inspection and observation issued a circular in July 1775, stating that they had taken too little notice of Robinson's views in the past; thus, "Mr. Robinson, weakly imagining that this tenderness and lenity proceeded from fear, began to vaunt and exalt, and with an effrontery ever the companion of ignorance proceeded more boldly and openly to stamp his vile and slavish ministerial principles upon the weak and unwary, over too many of whom, in the forests of Sussex and Maryland, by means of his office and store, he has too much influence." Specifically, the committee was presented with evidence that Robinson had sold tea in his store and had referred to the Continental Congress as "an unconstitutional body of men."

The committee denounced Robinson for refusing to appear before them unless accompanied by a body of armed supporters and urged all patriots to break off all connection to him, publishing their findings in the *Pennsylvania Journal*. Robinson strongly protested to the journal, stating that the charges against him were without merit and that the findings had been improperly published, since they had only been approved by a minority of the committee. The debate over whether the committee had acted properly raged back and forth for some time and was never entirely resolved.

This incident is clear evidence that by mid-1775, the two sides had both become too intractable in their positions, making compromise nearly impossible. Robinson's evolution from Sussex County's most prominent political leader to the focus of the Sussex County Committee of Inspection and Observation is eloquent testimony to the impact that the coming of the Revolution had on the county. As Hancock writes, "He eventually became the state's most prominent loyalist. Associated with him were such people as Boaz Manlove, a former sheriff and country politician, and Joshua Hill, an assemblyman and large landowner. While conservative leaders appear in all three counties, it is significant that only one loyalist leader of real stature, Thomas Robinson, emerged in the entire state and that he was forced to leave in the spring of 1777."

Before departing his native land in the dark of night in a small boat across the waters of Rehoboth Bay and from there out into the ocean to intercept a British naval vessel, Robinson had organized an outright rebellion against the patriot cause in the vicinity of Cedar Creek in northeastern Sussex. He successfully gathered together some 1,500 disaffected Tories. He had aided and abetted the British cause in every way he could and continued to do so even after making his way to New York, then occupied by British troops. After serving the British army during the war, Robinson, like many of the more prominent loyalists from Delaware and other states, took refuge in Nova Scotia. In 1786, he made a formal and rather poignant request to be allowed to return to Delaware, which was granted by Governor Nicholas Van Dyke. He died in his native Sussex in 1789.

Interestingly, Robinson's family continues to be prominent in Sussex County affairs to the present day. His son Peter, after reading law with Delaware Chancellor Nicholas Ridgely of Dover, was admitted to the bar in 1799 and became a leading attorney in the new Sussex County seat of Georgetown. The commodious home he built there, known as "The Judge's," still stands one block off the Georgetown Circle and is occupied by members of the Robinson family. Before becoming a judge, Peter Robinson practiced law alongside men like James Patriot Wilson, son of the ardent Lewes patriot Rev. Matthew Wilson, and William Peery, a native of Sussex who had commanded a company in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. Another of his contemporaries in the Sussex County bar was the future U.S. Senator William Hill Wells, son-in-law of General John Dagworthy, late of Dagsboro, who had commanded the Sussex County militia during the war, leading their efforts to control the incursions of those who had heeded the call of Peter Robinson's late father. Other prominent Sussex Countians of the day included Dagworthy's nephew, the future governors Nathanial Mitchell of Laurel and Col. David Hall of Lewes, both of whom had served as officers in the Continental Army. One wonders if these former adversaries have ever talked about the days when the passions of Sussex Countians ran high for and against the cause of liberty.

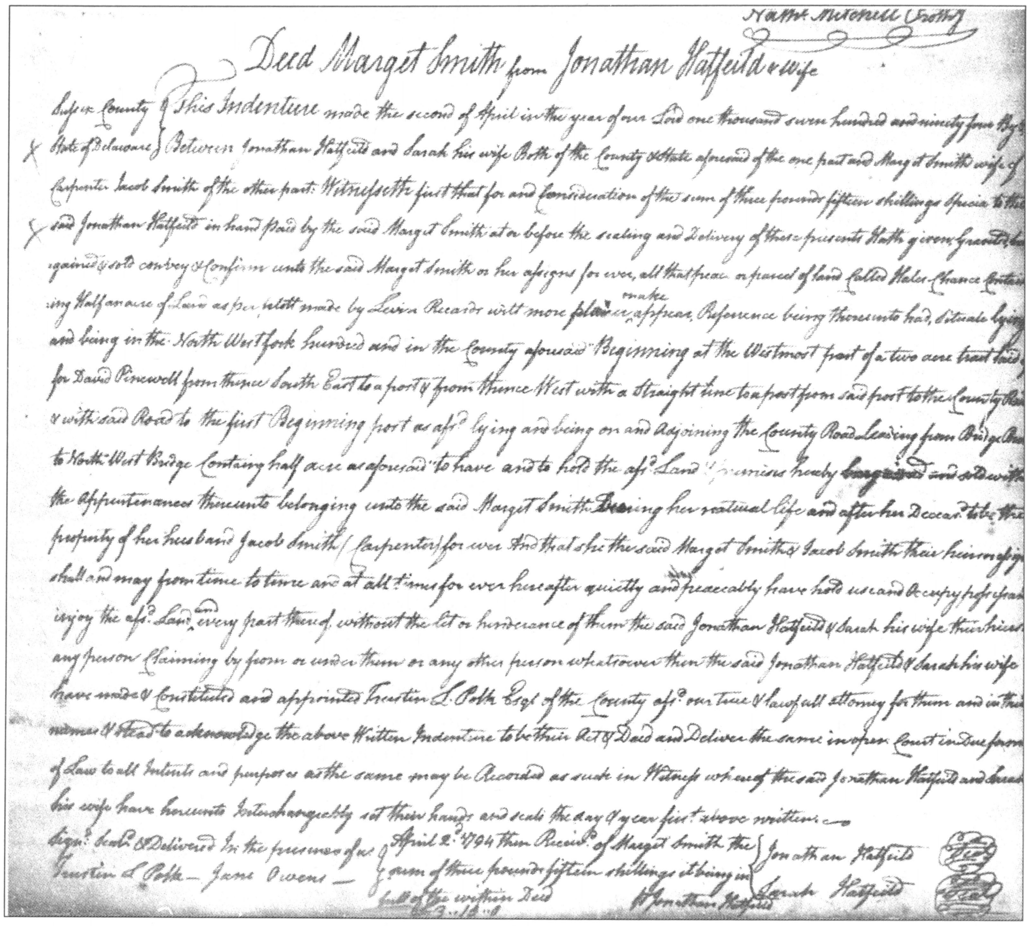


Mason-Dixon Cornerstone (Middle Point Monument) Route 54 Delmar, MD. Listed in the Maryland Historic Trust Inventory of Historic Properties as WI-70, the middle stone marker of the first trans-peninsular line was laid in 1751. Mason and Dixon began their survey at this point on June 25, 1764. They marked the stone with Lord Baltimore's seal on the south and west, and Penn's seal on the north and east. Richard Cooper Collection, Nabb Research Center.

Bridgeville in the 18th Century

By Emalu Myer Simpson

With Research Contributed by Lisa Just and John Williamson



Natt. Mitchell (Scotty)

Deed Marget Smith from Jonathan Hatfeild & wife

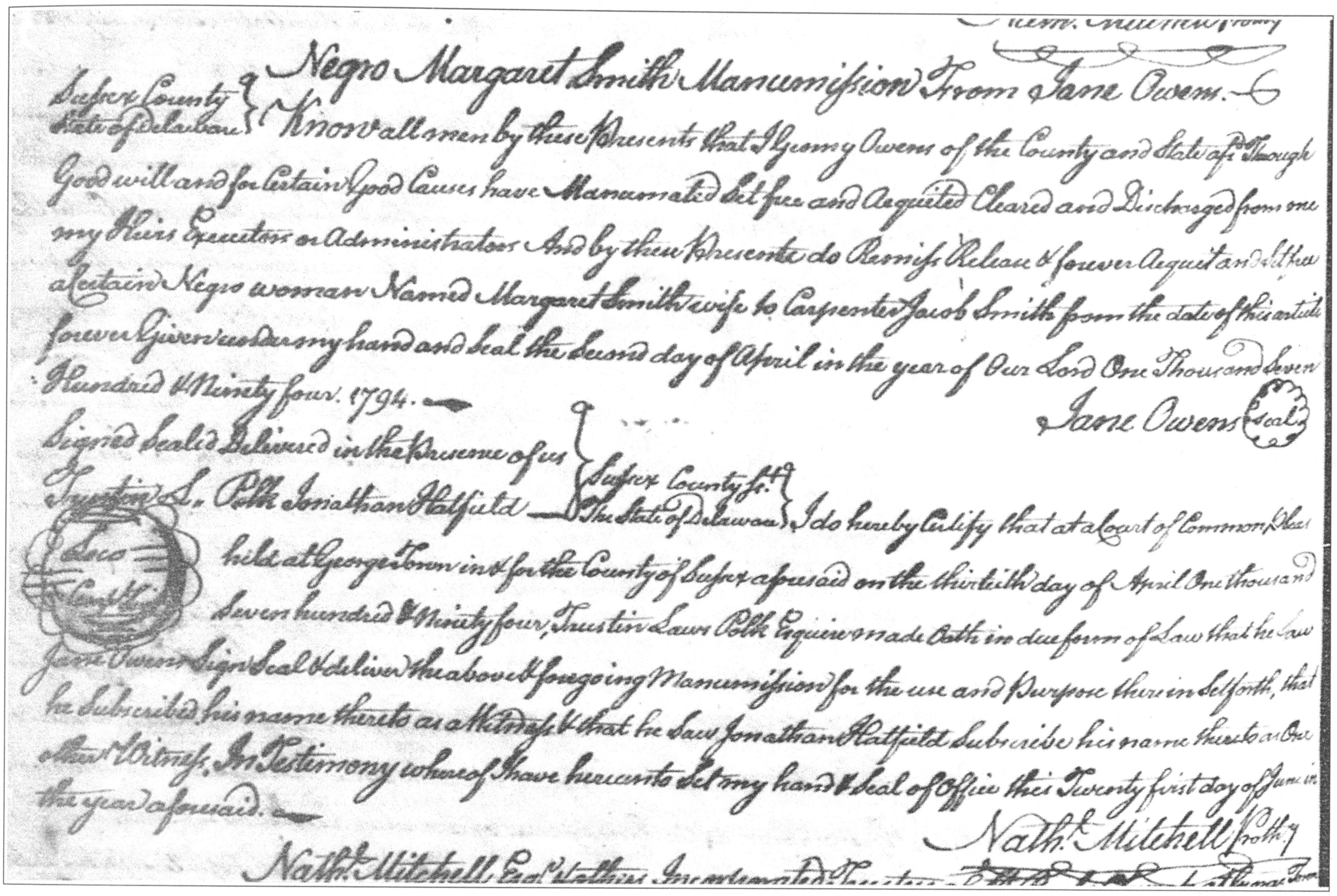
Sussex County } This Indenture made the second of April in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety four By
State of Delaware } Between Jonathan Hatfeild and Sarah his wife Both of the County & State aforesaid of the one part and Marget Smith wife of
Carpenter Jacob Smith of the other part: Witnesseth first that for and Consideration of the sum of three pounds fifteen shillings Specia to the
said Jonathan Hatfeild in hand Paid by the said Marget Smith at or before the sealing and Delivery of these presents Hath given Granted bar
gained & sold convey & Confirm unto the said Marget Smith or her assigns for ever, all that peace or parcel of land Called Hales Chance Contain
ing Half an acre of Land as per platt made by Levin Ricards will more ~~plainer~~ make appear, Reference being thereunto had, Situate lying
and being in the North West fork hundred and in the County aforesaid Beginning at the Westmost post of a two acre tract laid
for David Pinewell from thence South East to a post & from thence West with a Straight line to a post from said post to the County Roa
& with said Road to the first Beginning post as afsd. lying and being on and Adjoining the County Road Leading from Bridge Bra
to North West Bridge Containg half acre as aforesaid to have and to hold the afsd. Land & premises hereby ~~bargained and sold~~ with
the Appurtenances thereunto belonging unto the said Marget Smith During her natural life and after her Deceas. to be the
property of her husband Jacob Smith (Carpenter) for ever And that she the said Marget Smith & Jacob Smith their heirs or assig
shall and may from time to time and at all times for ever hereafter quietly and peaceably have hold use and Occupy possess and
enjoy the afsd. Land and every part thereof without the let or hinderance of them the said Jonathan Hatfeild & Sarah his wife their heirs
any person Claiming by from or under them or any other person whatsoever then the said Jonathan Hatfeild & Sarah his wife
have made & Constituted and appointed Trustin L. Polk Esqr of the County afsd. our true & lawfull attorney for them and in their
names & stead to acknowledge the above Written Indenture to be their Act & Deed and Deliver the same in open Court in due form
of Law to all Intents and purposes as the same may be Recorded as such in Witness whereof the said Jonathan Hatfeild and Sarah
his wife have hereunto Interchangeably set their hands and seals the day & year first above written —
Sign'd Seal'd & Delivered In the presence of us { April 2d 1794 then Receiv'd of Marget Smith the } Jonathan Hatfeild
Trustin L. Polk — Jane Owens — { sum of three pounds fifteen shillings it being in } Sarah Hatfeild
full of the within Deed Jonathan Hatfeild

Figure 1. Sussex Deed Liber P, f. 292

The town of Bridgeville, DE, is best known today for two primary reasons. First, it is the site of the Sudler House, one of the oldest existing homes in Sussex County, and second, it was the hometown of William Cannon, Governor of Delaware from 1862-1865. A memorial in the town's center honors Christopher Nutter, who in 1684 was the first to obtain several land patents in the vicinity of Bridge Branch, the small creek from which Bridgeville derives its name. The largest of the patents was a 1,200 acre tract named Attowottocoquin, an American Indian word translated in the land records as "Ruff at ye Back." Nutter was an early trader and Indian interpreter for the Maryland Colonial government who lived on land further south near the mouth of the Nanticoke River. By 1702, two of his sons, Charles and William Nutter, settled on Bridge Branch and were among the earliest inhabitants of the area, which was then considered part of Dorchester County, MD.

Charles Nutter, known in some records as Captain Nutter, served as a Justice of the Peace for Dorchester County between 1718 and 1732. In 1712, a survey for John Bounds, for a tract named Bounds Square, references a bounded white oak "standing about a mile below Nutter's Branch by the road side that passeth from Charles Nutter's to the landing of Nanticoke River being the common cart road from the said Nutters to the said landing." A special warrant of re-survey granted to John Rider for the tract Dublin describes the location as lying on the "north side of Bridge Branch;" therefore, it is understood that a bridge across the branch existed by 1716 and that a road through this area existed even earlier.

Despite its early settlement, the town of Bridgeville did not resemble a village until after the American Revolution. Beginning in the late 17th century, the area lying between the Northwest Fork Branch (now Marshy Hope Creek) and the main branch of the Nanticoke River was occupied by planters and farmers who lived on substantial landholdings. While most of the early plantations were claimed under Maryland patents, the ongoing legal border battles between the Calvert family of Maryland and William Penn of Pennsylvania involving the two territories made many reluctant to pay the necessary fees to maintain their titles and interests in the lands they had surveyed. The political uncertainty of living on the upper branches of the Nanticoke River made it a high-risk area for land speculation; only the most opportunistic and stalwart endured the many years of upheaval (See *Shoreline*, Vol. 19, July 2012, "The Outten/Willey Affair"). In 1753, Roger Adams, a long-time



Negro Margaret Smith Manumission From Jane Owens.

Sussex County }
State of Delaware } Know all men by these Presents that I Jenny Owens of the County and State afsd Through
Good will and for Certain Good Causes have Manumated Set free and Acquited Cleared and Discharged from me
my Heirs Executors or Administrators And by these Presents do Remiss Release & forever Acquit and Set free
a Certain Negro woman Named Margaret Smith wife to Carpenter Jacob Smith from the date of this article
forever Given under my hand and Seal the Second day of April in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven
Hundred & Ninety four. 1794.

Jane Owens (Seal)

Signed Sealed Delivered in the Presence of us
Truston L. Polk Jonathan Hatfield

Sussex County ss.
The State of Delaware } I do hereby Certify that at a Court of Common Pleas
held at Georgetown in & for the County of Sussex afsd on the thirtieth day of April One thousand
Seven hundred & Ninety four, Truston Laws Polk Esquire made Oath in due form of Law that he saw
Jane Owens Sign Seal & deliver the above & foregoing Manumission for the use and Purpose therein Setforth, that
he Subscribed his name thereto as a Witness & that he Saw Jonathan Hatfield Subscribe his name thereto as One
other Witness. In Testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal of Office this Twenty first day of June in
the year aforesaid.

Nathl. Mitchell Prothy

Nathl. Mitchell

Figure 2. Sussex Deed Liber P, f. 304 manumission of Margaret Smith

resident of the area, came under the Maryland government's scrutiny after he obtained a survey from Pennsylvania adjacent to his Maryland patents. Coincidentally, Adams was involved in a land dispute with one of his neighbors. It was not unusual for neighbors to use the border controversy to further their own boundary disputes for adjacent tracts.

While Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon completed their historic survey in obedience to the 1760 order given by the English Crown, citizens along the upper Nanticoke looked forward to a time when political allegiance did not threaten their land titles. As a result, the population began to grow. In 1773, Maryland's Caroline County was formed in reaction to the growing population around the headwaters of the Nanticoke and Choptank rivers. For a short time, citizens of the community around Bridge Branch were served closer to home and no longer had to travel long distances to conduct government business.

Once the Mason-Dixon survey line was ratified around 1775, the former Maryland citizens began the process of obtaining warrants and resurveys under William Penn. However, few had obtained new patents before the colonies declared independence from England and its Colonial landlords. Almost simultaneously, the three lower counties of Pennsylvania met to form the state of Delaware and to write their new constitution. Once again, the citizens had good reason to question the integrity of their land titles. When the war ended, the Delaware legislature finally began to focus on domestic affairs. Shortly after, the decision was made to build a new courthouse in Georgetown to serve the disenfranchised population of the west side of Sussex County; in 1791, Delaware's county seat moved from Lewes to Georgetown. A year earlier, Caroline County, MD, established a permanent courthouse at Pig Point, now Denton. Realigning most of the area between the forks of the Nanticoke River into Delaware and moving the county seat from Lewes to Georgetown undoubtedly contributed to the development of Bridge Branch, which now sat on a busy crossroads.

The downtown business district of Bridgeville, today's intersection of Market and Main streets, was first surveyed in 1743 under the proprietary government of Maryland for James Haile and was known as Haile's Choice. Although he did not pay the necessary fees and obtain a patent for Haile's Choice until three years later, it is likely that Haile was already a

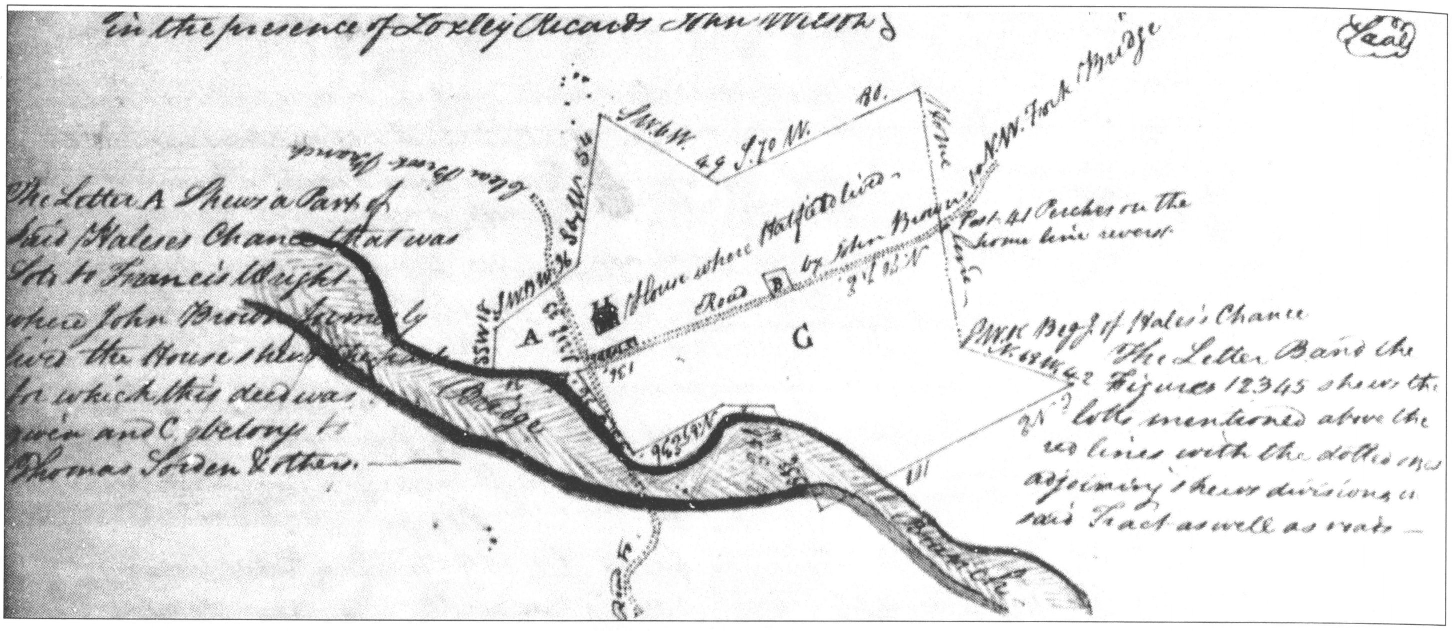

In the presence of Loxley Ricards John Wilson
Seal
The Letter A Shews a Part of said Haleses Chance that was sold to Francis Wright where John Brown formerly lived the House shews the part for which this deed was given and C belongs to Thomas Sorden & others.
Road to Clear Brook Branch
A
B
C
House where Hatfield lives
Road by John Browns to N.W. Fork Bridge
Bridge
The Letter B and the Figures 12345 shews the lots mentioned above the red lines with the dotted ones adjoining shews divisions in said Tract as well as roads —

Figure 3. Sussex Deed, Liber W, f. 656. The plat pictured is oriented facing south. It shows land on the SOUTH side of Bridge Branch, the intersection of the two main roads, the house where William Hatfield lived, five small lots drawn out of the southwest corner of the intersection and a larger lot in the middle of the tract labeled B. On the left side of the plat is written: "The Letter A shows a part of said Haleses Chance that was sold to Francis Wright where John Brown formerly lived. The House shows the part for which this deed was given and C belongs to Thomas Sorden & Others." On the right side is written: "The Letter B and the Figures 12345 shows the lots mentioned above the red lines with the dotted ones adjoining their divisions in said tract as well as roads." The roads are labeled "Road by John Browns to N.W. Fork Bridge and Road to Clear Brook Branch." An old well and apple orchard near Lot B are described in the deed, but they are not pictured. The deed further describes the corner lots as being forty foot square and Lot B is one-half acre.

resident. In 1743, he signed a petition with his neighbors to have the road cleared from Northwest Fork Branch to Cabin Creek. A few years later, he received a warrant of resurvey and expanded the original 50-acre tract to include adjacent vacant land. The later 1747 tract of 93 acres was renamed Haile's Chance, but was sometimes still identified as Haile's Choice in deeds. In 1753, James Haile transferred Haile's Chance/Choice in three separate deeds: one to his wife Ann, another to his oldest son James Haile Jr., and another to his sons Ezekiel and Waitman Haile. Ann was to receive "the westernmost part of the tract where the manor plantation lyeth." In 1769, Ezekiel and Waitman Haile sold Haile's Chance to William Hatfield. In 1784, after a series of transfers within the Hatfield family, approximately one-half, or 44 acres, became the property of Jonathan Hatfield.

Some of the Haile and Hatfield landowners were also tradesmen. In one of the 1753 deeds, James Haile was identified as a shoemaker and William and Jonathan Hatfield as blacksmiths. When William Hatfield died in 1772, a list of debts owed to his estate included many of the inhabitants who lived near Bridge Branch (see Prerogative Court of Maryland Inventories, List of Desperate Debts). His inventory not only listed the tools of a blacksmith such as an anvil, bellows and tongs, but also random articles such as a violin, flute, tea ware, three punch bowls, six open casks and chocolate, it is possible that Haile's Chance may have been a gathering place for entertainment as well as commerce. James Staton or Stayton, another early inhabitant of nearby Johns Neck, was described in a 1750 Dorchester deed as a "dancing master"; perhaps formal dancing was an accepted social tradition in the region. Hatfield's inventory also included 12 pounds of iron and 60 bushels of coal, which easily could have been obtained from one of the nearby bog iron operations that existed during his time. In 1792, a half-acre lot taken out of Haile's Chance was transferred by Jonathan Hatfield to Margaret Smith, the former slave of Jane (Jenny) Owens, and the wife of Jacob Smith, a carpenter. (See Figures 1 and 2.) As the population of "free Negroes" grew in the late 18th century, many former slaves and apprentices were able to make a living and a home in small town villages apart from their former masters.

In 1799, Jonathan Hatfield sold 40 acres of Haile's Chance to Joseph Ricards. At the time the deed was recorded, the plat pictured in Figure 3 was also entered into the deed book. Joseph Ricards – also Recard, Ricard, Rickard or Rickards – died in April 1804. In his will, he bequeathed Haile's Chance to his daughter, Polly Brown Rickards. Polly (Mary) married William Laws – their daughter Margaret A. B. Laws was the wife of Governor William Cannon. During the 19th century, the crossroads continued to be subdivided into lots becoming the location of stores, churches, hotels and, in 1861, a railroad station.

The name Bridgeville was adopted in 1810 and the town was incorporated in 1871. Today, Bridgeville, a pleasant agriculturally oriented community, is known for its homes and broad, tree-lined streets. Located on U.S. Route 13, about mid-way between Dover, the capital of Delaware, and Salisbury, MD, Bridgeville is one of the oldest surviving communities in western Sussex.

Emalu Simpson, a long-time Nabb supporter, has done extensive research on early Delmarva history.

The list of the Desperate Debts due to the estate of William Hatfield late of Dorchester County Deceased Returned by Elijah Hatfield Administrator to wit –

[Maryland Currency]	Maryd Cury
Anderton Brown	1.16.2
John Jessop-	2.7.8
William Polke	0.4.5
Alexander Laws	4.10.7
Charles Brown of Joseph	0.7.1
John Cripen-	2.16.17
Daniel Polke	4.0.1
James Cavinder	0.4.0
Robert Layton	0.6.0
Spencer Hitch¬¬	0.2.10
George Polke	0.5.6
Abraham Purnal	0.6.11
David Nutter	1.17.10
John Nutter	1.17.0
John White Jun	0.3.3
Wm Massey	0.4.0
Ann Dean	0.2.0
Wm Layton	0.7.1
Wm Turner of John	0.6.0
Nehemiah Hickman	0.2.0
Joshua Polke	0.4.0
James Smith	0.1.3
Wm Hitch	0.14.5
Robert Wallace	1.9.0
Robt Laws	1.7.10
Rachal Williams	0.7.8
John Linch	0.8.5
Robert Owens	0.12.3
Richard Passwaters	0.6.10
Lowder Layton	0.2.10
Nehemiah Layton	0.3.5
Sarah Recards	0.18.7
Charles Polke	0.4.0
Kendal Jacobs	0.1.8
John Holt	0.0.10
Henry Wright of Geo	0.1.3
Morgan Williams	0.2.0
Wm Wright	0.7.3
John Hurt	0.5.8
Jacob Bradley	0.0.10
Jonathan Hatfield	2.12.0
Whittington Hitch	0.10.0
Joseph Recards	0.8.5
Levin Hickman	0.4.5
William Willson Junr	0.2.10
John Laws Jun	0.9.3
Thos Ledingham	0.16.5
Richd Clifton	0.2.0
John Jacobs	1.18.10
Wm Rose of James	0.8.0
Thomas Layton Jun	01.6.2
Joshua Recards	0.6.6
Constant Cannon	0.0.5
Henry Downes	0.8.0
James Polke	0.11.10
Rosannah Millican	0.3.3
John Laws Senr	0.3.8
Joseph Waits	0.7.4
John Newman	0.1.8
Jacob Coverdail	0.0.6
Moses Addams	0.5.3
Joshua Hickman	0.0.8
John Hust	0.3.8
Wm Brown	0.15.3
Thos Layton Senr	0.5.10
Robt Ross	0.10.3
Edmund Hurley	1.0.5
Wm Gaskins	0.10.4
John Norman	0.19.8
Wm Furbiss	0.4.5
David Owens	0.1.7
Thomas Bounds	0.5.8
John Fisher	0.0.8
James Ross	0.2.5
Manuel Manlove	5.3.0
John Turner	0.7.4
Samuel Owens	0.17.2
Nathaniel Morris	0.15.8
John White	0.0.10
James Spence	0.2.10
James Truit	0.0.10
George Wallace	0.9.3
[pounds-shillings-pence]	**54.12.3**

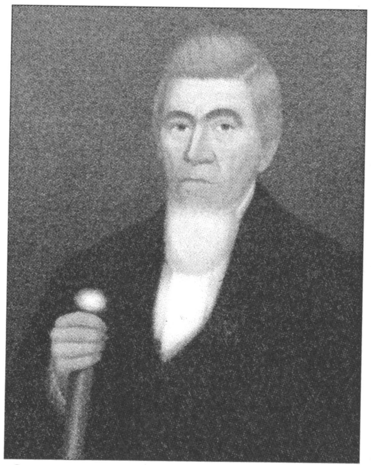
On the 25th Day of June Anno Domini 1772 Elijah Hatfield Administrator of Wm Hatfield late of Dorchester County deceased made oath on the Holy Evangeles of Almighty God that the within is a True List of desperate debts due to the said deceased that hath come to his hands possession or knowledge and if he should hereafter receive any sum of money that was due to the deceased he will account for the same or discover any desperate debts not specified in the within list he will return the same in an additional list. *Maryland Prerogative Inventories* Liber 110, f.10.

Delaware Divided: Sussex County During the Civil War

By Amanda Tuttle

On April 12, 1861, the Confederacy began its attack on Fort Sumter, commencing the most devastating war in American history. The force of the attack reverberated throughout America. All states, especially the Border States, knew that they had a difficult and complex decision to make. After they heard of the bombardment of Sumter, members of Sussex County's Democratic Party, mainly southern in sympathy, began to prepare themselves for the internal and external hardships they suspected they were about to face. In Seaford, southern sympathizers celebrated the attack on Sumter by shooting guns. Conversely, in surrounding areas, Union supporters began to meet and prepare for what Lincoln would soon ask of them. Delaware would be known as a pro-Union state; however, the southernmost county of Sussex would maintain a level of rebellion.

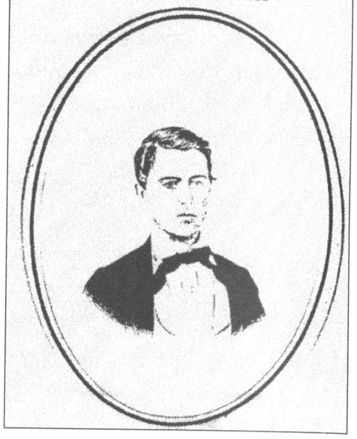
Delawareans were torn between their southern leanings and their love of the Union. Although a majority of the citizens remained loyal to Lincoln, a substantial number supported the secessionist cause. Former Governor William Henry Harrison Ross was a noted Confederate who had received wagons of supplies for a "secessionist company" near his home at Seaford. He is quoted as saying "I will die a thousand deaths before I make war on our brethren in Virginia." True to his statement, Ross left Delaware for Europe during the early stages of the war so that he and his family would be protected from the hostility that southern sympathizers might experience. In 1863, he attempted to return to Delaware but realized that he would be arrested for treason if he did so; he remained in Europe until after the war. Conversely, Ross' son Caleb joined the Virginia 9th Cavalry to fight for the Confederacy. Caleb would die of typhoid fever in 1861 while in Confederate service. After the war was over, William Ross sent a representative to retrieve his son's remains and they were returned to his family in Seaford.



Governor William Burton 1859-1863.

Seaford served as a soldier-smuggling station during the early years of the war. Men from Maryland and other sections of Delaware who wished to join the Confederacy were welcomed by Seaford's southern sympathizers. The soldiers would wait for nightfall and then covertly cross the Chesapeake Bay to the shores of Virginia. It is estimated that 200-300 men followed this route to join the Confederacy. George Julian Robinson was one such Delawarean who chose to head south from Sussex to aid the Confederacy. Although he was wounded on June 27, 1862, at the Battle of Gaines' Mill, he would recover and continue to fight in the battles of Antietam and Gettysburg. After the war, Robinson went to Texas but eventually returned to Delaware in the 1880s, where he remained until his death in 1887.

Portrait of Caleb Ross



On April 15, 1861, the Lincoln administration called upon the states to fill a quota of 75,000 volunteers to fight in the Union Army and Navy. Delaware was expected to provide 780 of those volunteers. Delaware Governor William Burton questioned the Lincoln administration's constitutional authority to request volunteers. Burton seemingly wished to remain a neutral governor and to have Delaware remain an impartial state. As a result, he was considered secessionist by some of the pro-Union citizens in Delaware. Despite his concerns, Delaware would provide the Union with nine infantry regiments, a cavalry battalion, two field artillery batteries, a heavy artillery battery and two independent companies. It is estimated that between 500 and 2,000 men from Delaware, of all colors, refused Lincoln's request and served in the Confederate army or navy.

In 1861, President Lincoln proposed a "compensated emancipation" to free the slaves in Delaware to Delaware Congressman George P. Fisher. Fisher arranged a meeting between Lincoln and one of the largest slaveholders in Delaware, Republican Benjamin Burton of Indian River Hundred in Sussex County. Burton expressed the sentiments held by many Delaware slave holders. A majority felt that Lincoln would not compensate them, and they would be left without a major portion of their economic support. Lincoln stated to Burton that "If I can get this plan started in Delaware, I have no fear that all the Border States will accept it ... This is the cheapest and most humane way of ending the war and saving lives." Despite all of Lincoln's efforts

Delaware Confederate Monument Georgetown, DE.

to convince them of the importance of compliance, the Delaware Legislature was not ready to accept the proposal. The failure to win the approval of his plan by the State of Delaware would be one of the deciding factors determining the course of action Lincoln followed regarding the "peculiar institution" of slavery. Lincoln persisted, but, when he realized that even the smallest slave state would not accept the offer, he began to draft a more radical document known as the Emancipation Proclamation.

Though Delaware remained in the Union, the decision was not without much debate. Throughout the war, members of Sussex County fought for both sides and as a result families and loyalties were torn apart. Weapons and supplies were sent from the county and were received by both southerners and northerners. Delaware was considered an important stronghold for the Union; if Lincoln could not maintain loyalty among the Border States, then the Union cause would be harder to achieve. Commerce would eventually be the strongest deciding factor that led Delaware to remain loyal to the Union. The northern area of Delaware was inherently connected to the more industrialized northern states. However, the southernmost county of Sussex held a strong connection to the Confederacy and would remain sympathetic to the southern cause.

Among the list of soldiers who "went south" from Sussex County, are members of families whose ancestors had settled the area in the 17th century. Many names are still found today among those residing in the "southernmost county" of Delaware.

Amanda Tuttle is a graduate assistant at the Nabb Center pursuing her Master of Art in history at Salisbury University.

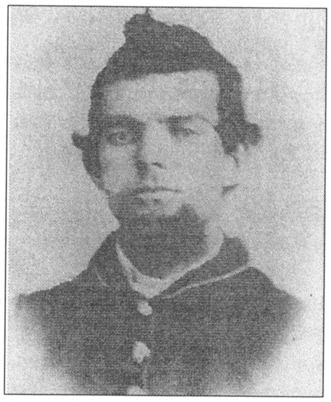
A large Civil War monument at the Nutter B. Marvel Carriage Museum in Georgetown, Delaware was unveiled in 2007. According to the Delaware Grays Web site: "The monument includes any Delaware statesmen who resided in Delaware prior to the War Between the States or those that fought or gave aid to the Confederate States of America. Included on this monument are the soldiers' names, rank, unit, and original place of residence within Delaware (if known). The monument stands approximately 12 feet tall with a 16 foot wide base, and includes all Delaware citizen soldiers names." For more details, see www.descv.org. The following list shows only those who were associated with Sussex County:

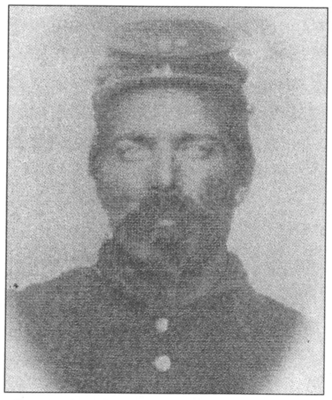
Ancestor	**Unit**	**Residence**
Allen, William A.	Virginia Cavalry Young's Co.	Seaford
Bell, Henry W.	1st Battalion Maryland Cavalry Co. A, Private	Laurel
Bradley, Isaac	1st Maryland Cavalry Co. B, Private	Seaford
Burnes, James	Confederate army	Milford
Cooper, James	Confederate army	Laurel
Cooper, William T.	1st Maryland Cavalry Co. B, 2nd Maryland Cavalry Co. D, Private	Laurel
Firman, John D.	Confederate army	Baltimore Hundred
Giles, Thomas D.	3rd Maryland Artillery, 4th Battery, 2nd Lt	Laurel
Hearn, Benjamin C.	1st Maryland Cavalry Co. B	Northwest Fork Hundred
Hearn, Samuel Batson	1st Battalion Maryland Cavalry Co. B, Private	Delmar
Hessey, David Stewart	13th Virginia Infantry Co. G, 1st Confederate Engineer Corp Co. I, 2nd Lt	Seaford
Horsey, Thomas J.	9th Virginia Cavalry Co. H	Seaford
Jacobs, Edward Richards	9th Virginia Cavalry Co. H	Bridgeville
Martin, David A.	13th Mississippi Infantry Co. E, Sailor	Seaford
Martin, John E.	Confederate staff	Seaford
Martin, Jr., Hugh	2nd Maryland Cavalry Co. C	Seaford
Marvel, John H.	3rd Arkansas Infantry Co. F, Private	Nothrwest Fork Hundred
May, Bushrod L.	1st Virginia Rockbridge 1st Light Artillery Battery, Surgeon	Tunnels Store
Meredith, Whitely W.	Willow Grove Militia, Captain	Milford
Messick, Hiram Rose	1st Maryland Cavalry Co. G	Seaford
Morrill, Joshua	Confederate Infantry	Seaford
Paynter, Caleb R.	Delaware Militia, Captain	Georgetown
Polk, Leonidas	Army of the Trans Mississippi, Lieutenant General	Seaford
Polk, Trusten	Trans-Mississippi Department, Judge	Bridgeville
Polk, Trusten	12th Virginia Cavalry Co. K & 1st Maryland Cavalry Co. K, Captain	Sussex
Price, Theodore	Texas 12th Infantry Co. C, NCS 1st Lt.	Seaford
Robinson, George Julian	5th Texas Infantry Co. A, Sergeant & Hood's Brigade	Georgetown
Ross, Caleb	9th Virginia Cavalry Co. H., Private	Seaford
Rust, Casteby Fleet	Employed by Confederate Government	Seaford
Rust, Charles Palmer	Virginia Calvary Co. C & H	Laurel
Satterfield, Daniel	Confederate Army	Milford
Shipley, Joseph, M.D.	Surgeon for General staff, Captain	Seaford
Spence, James	Virginia Light Artillery, Private	
Spence, James H.	9th Virginia Cavalry Co. D	
Vickers, Washington A.	2nd Maryland Infantry Co. G & A	Seaford
White, David Henry [black or Nanticoke Indian]	*CSS Alabama* crew member	Georgetown

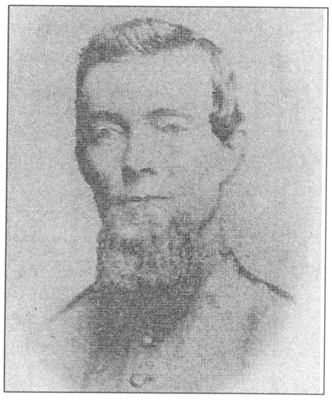
Brothers in Arms

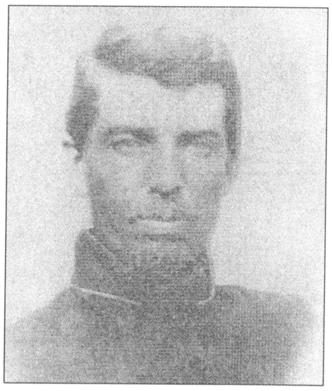
By Kendra Pain

Board member E. Niel Carey provided newspaper clipping and family information for this interpretation of Sussex County brothers in the Civil War.


Pvt. Robert F. Carey, served at Fredericksburg


Sgt. John Carey, served at Gettysburg, killed at The Wilderness


Pvt. Woolsey Burton Carey Jr., wounded at Fredericksburg


Cpl. Thomas P. Carey, killed at Gettysburg

Although the Civil War infamously tore families apart as two halves of the country battled with devastating results, it was also a time in which families joined together to fight for their common beliefs and patriotic ideals. The Carey Brothers of Sussex County, DE, are a great example of this unity; four of the five Carey sons – John, Woolsey Jr., Robert and Thomas – enrolled in the First Regiment of Delaware in Georgetown during the spring of 1861. For the nation, they went from farmers to soldiers; together, they sacrificed their health and, in some cases, their lives.

After training together in Wilmington, DE, they served with the First Delaware, working as guards for the railroad near Havre de Grace. In 1862, they joined the Army of the Potomac and fought in the Battle of Antietam. Two of the Carey brothers – the oldest brother, John, age 31, and the youngest, Thomas, age 21 – fought at Antietam. Though John received a minor injury, they were both well enough to continue on to Fredericksburg, where they reunited with their brothers Woolsey, age 29, and Robert, age 22. The Battle of Fredericksburg was the only battle in which all four brothers fought. Woolsey Jr. was shot in the right arm during the fight and never recovered; the ball could not be removed from his arm, and he spent the rest of the war in hospitals for either his injury or some related illness. The other Careys continued on; John and Robert fought in the Battle of Chancellorsville, but Thomas was too ill to fight. Although the three remaining brothers marched to Gettysburg, Robert's poor health prevented him from participating in the battle. He was forced to return to work at the U.S.A. Service Hospital, where he remained for the duration of the war.

The First Delaware played an important role in the Battle of Gettysburg. Though they missed the first day of fighting, they spent the entire second day near Cemetery Hill. On the third day, they were positioned front and center in what would come to be known as Pickett's Charge. Pickett's Charge was a particularly gruesome point in the Battle of Gettysburg. Men at the front would fire over the wall, while soldiers in the back quickly reloaded and passed the firearms forward. The First Delaware, 14th Connecticut, and 12th New Jersey had their spare weapons constantly loaded and lined up next to them – this allowed them to fire without pause at the charging rebels. John Carey fought throughout the charge, but Thomas, known for being impulsive, kept peeking over the stone wall. Although his friends repeatedly warned him not to expose himself to the enemy, he persisted and, at age 22, was fatally injured by a gunshot wound through the head. He was buried in the Gettysburg Cemetery near the spot where the Lincoln Monument would be placed. John Carey continued to fight with his regiment for almost a year until the Battle of the Wilderness, when he was assigned the duty of flag bearer. He was confronted by rebel soldiers who demanded he lower his flag. In reply, he courageously declared that "he would not lower the flag for any Rebel," – he was subsequently shot, killed and buried in an unmarked grave.

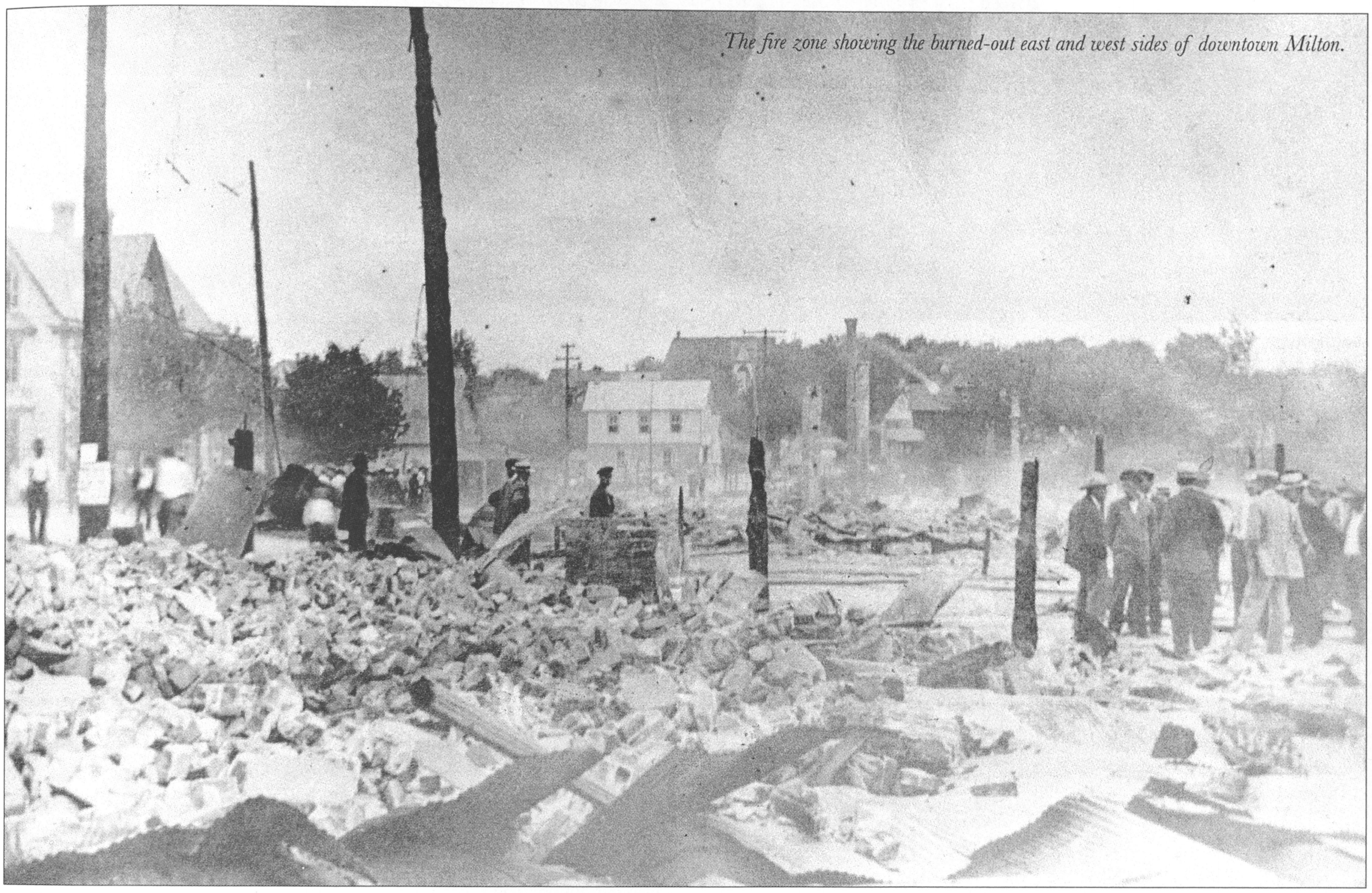
The two remaining Carey brothers lived through the war and received pensions for disabilities. Woolsey Jr. never regained full use of his arm and received a pension of $8 a month for the remainder of his life. He died a few years after the war in March 1870; it is believed that his injury caused complications while he was sick with pneumonia, leading to his premature death at age 36. Robert was the only Carey soldier who lived to an old age. Despite the fact that he lived to 74, his health was perpetually poor. Although he was never injured in battle, he suffered from "rheumatism in his knees, acute diarrhea and disease in the lungs" for the rest of his life.

The Carey brothers paid a heavy price for protecting the country they loved: two were killed in battle, one was killed by injuries obtained in battle, and the other lived his life with chronic pain and sickness. Through Robert's children and grandchildren, the Careys' story has been preserved, giving a glimpse into the lives of those who fought in the Civil War.

Kendra Pain, currently a senior at Salisbury University, was an English intern at the Nabb Center.

Milton's Disastrous Fire of 1909

By Joana S. Donovan

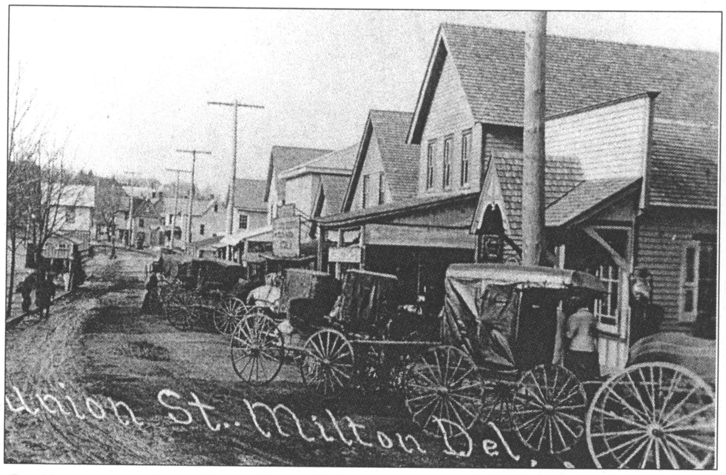

The fire zone showing the burned-out east and west sides of downtown Milton.

My hometown, Milton, is located in northeastern Sussex County approximately 7 miles from the Delaware Bay and 15 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. With its first settlement at the head of the Broadkill River in the early 1700s, Milton grew from "thirteen houses, four stores, seven granaries, one grain shipping station and a tanning yard" to a prosperous town in the 1900s with churches, schools, factories, canneries, a business center with 21 structures and a population of approximately 1,000. The business center lined both sides of the principal street (originally named Main Street), which during the Civil War was renamed Union Street (north of the river) and Federal Street (south of the river).

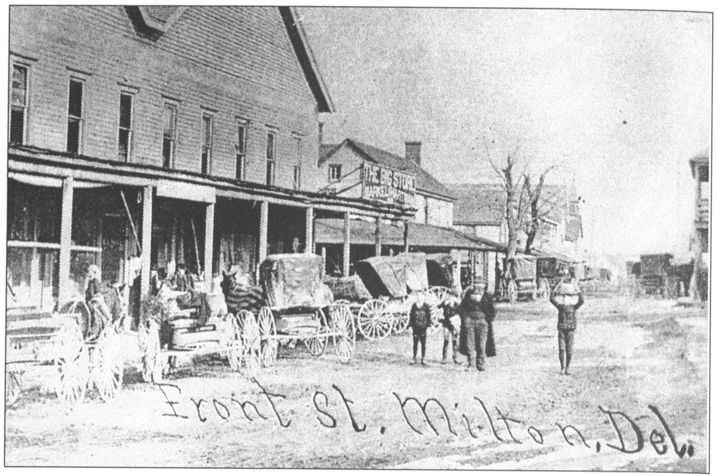
As Milton prospered and grew, it experienced minor disasters of both flood and fire. In August 1889, a strong storm flooded Union Street on both sides of the Broadkill River with "a tide that was the highest in twenty years"; boats had to be used to travel from the south to the north end of the town. Fires, a great threat since wood was used to construct almost all the structures in town, also occurred. There had been a kitchen fire in May 1881, a hotel fire in May 1889, a business area fire that destroyed four buildings in December 1890 and a fire that burned the new schoolhouse in November 1892. However, none of these fires prepared the residents for the fire of August 1909 that swept through the business center of Milton.

The fire was first discovered in the early morning of Friday, August 13, in the "Big Store" at the corner of Federal and Union streets that housed three businesses: a general store, a drug store and a merchandise store. A night watchman sounded the alarm and soon practically all of the townspeople were out on the street, throwing buckets and tubs of water on the flames. The Milton Fire Company responded with its old-fashioned hand pumper and began using water pumped from the Broadkill River. The wooden buildings were summer dry and the flames were fierce, making the fire hard to contain. Calls for help were made to the neighboring towns of Lewes, Milford and Georgetown.

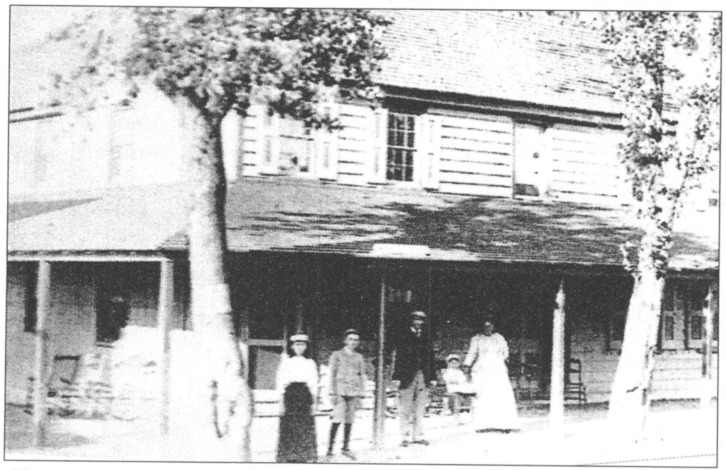
The flames spread rapidly from the "Big Store" down the east side of Union Street, engulfing one building after another: first was the post office, then four more stores, a meat market, a wheelwright shop, the blacksmith shop, and lastly an ice cream and confectionery parlor, which was the final building before the river. The fire, which was finally stopped by the Broadkill, had destroyed every building on the east side of Union Street from the "Big Store" to the Red Bridge. The firemen, no longer able to pump water from the river, reverted to carrying water from homes and other private buildings to fill the pumper.



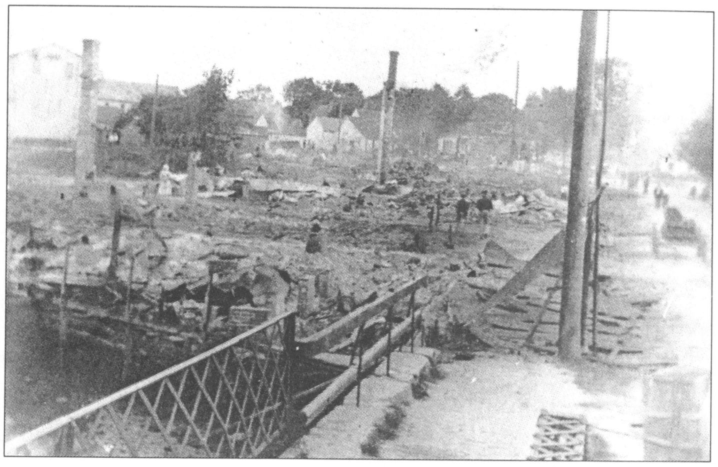
Looking north, the east side of the Milton business area in the late 1880s-early 1900s. The pond and bridge are on the left.



The east side of Union Street (called Front Street by locals), looking south. The building with the sign reading the "Big Store" was where the fire started. The house behind the sign with the brick chimney was the S.J. Wilson and Son building.



The S.J. Wilson & Son building (Hardware and Undertaking) before the fire.



The view from the Red Bridge, looking south, showing the destroyed business area.

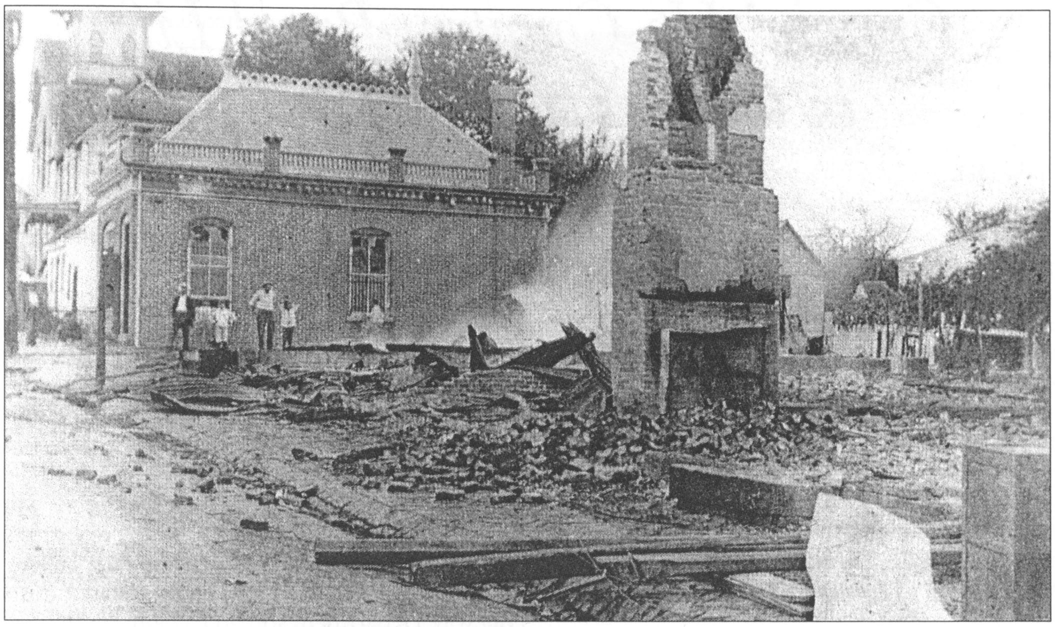
Meanwhile, at the other end of the east side of Union Street, the "Big Store" (where the fire had started) collapsed and sent embers into the air, igniting the hardware and undertaking establishment of S.J. Wilson and Son. From there, the fire went up both sides of Federal Street, where it consumed the National Bank (all the money was saved and moved to a bank in Lewes), the Ponder Hotel, one private residence, a meat store, a pool room and another dwelling. The flames, relentless in their destruction, raged south down Federal Street, destroying the telephone office, a barbershop and a dwelling, only to be stopped by the Sussex Savings and Trust Bank building, which was built of brick. Only the residences and businesses on the west side of Union Street, though often on fire, were saved. It all came to an end around five o'clock in the morning. In only four hours, the fire had destroyed 18 buildings, leaving only three stores standing, with an estimated damage of $100,000.

The Lewes Fire Department, along with several Lewes townspeople, arrived on a special train to find the fire nearly under control. Immediately, they began to help clean up by extinguishing all smoldering areas, pulling down telephone poles and any standing brick walls, and removing all dangerous objects. The Georgetown Hook and Ladder Company, along with its mayor and many citizens, arrived later to help cleanup. By six o'clock in the morning, the sunrise revealed a dismal scene in the streets of downtown Milton.

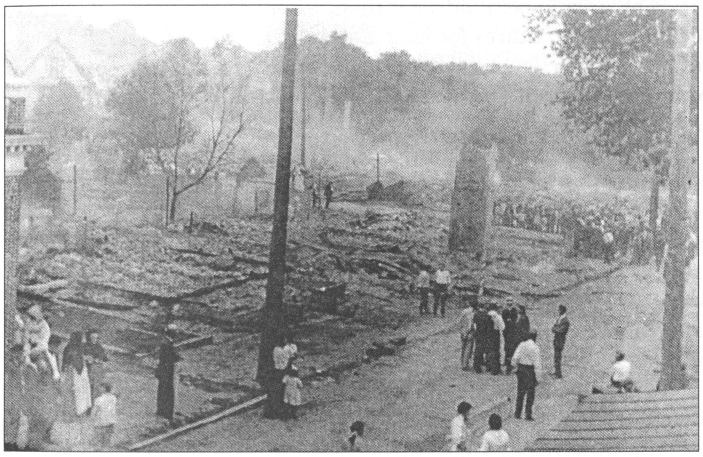
In the 1940s, when I was old enough to go shopping in town with my mother, most of the buildings had been rebuilt using brick. I was aware there had been a town fire, but was unaware of the extent of destruction. In 2006, when I was asked by the Milton Historical Society to write a book on the history of my hometown, my research revealed the amazing photographs seen here and a newspaper print of the fire.

The following are excerpts from two of my favorite articles. Not only do they detail the destruction of the fire, but they also describe the spirit of the men and women who valiantly fought the flames.

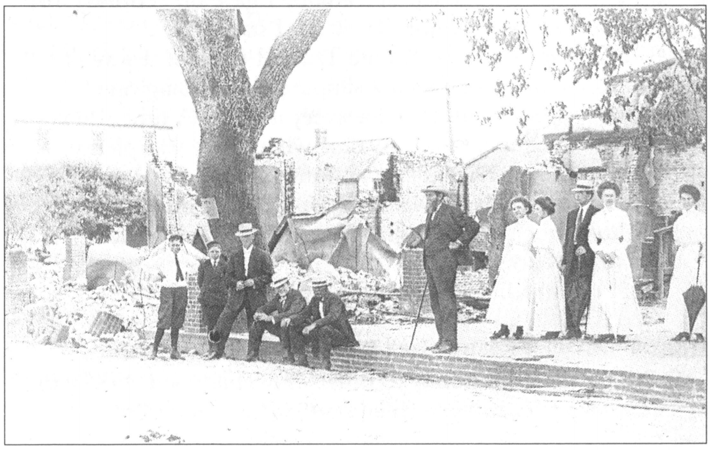
> "At sunrise a scene of desolation hung over and around the business portion of our pretty town. The telephone poles were laying across the streets, where they had been cut and fallen, and the wires together



The brick bank building that stopped the fire as it climbed the hill of Federal Street.



This view, filmed across the street from the bank, looking northeast, shows the smoke from the smoldering debris and Union Street crowded with people.



After the great fire.

with the electric wires, made navigation along the streets perilous. Most of the day on Friday the fire hose played on the smoldering fire which was by no means extinguished … a crowd was loitering around all day, many of them being persons from contiguous towns drawn hither by curiosity. The telephone and electric light companies had their employees on the ground, gathering up the twisted wires; and the telephone company delivered a load of new material on this day to replace the old which was unfit to use again … The Mayor of Milton praised the men of the Milton Volunteer Fire Company, and those from the companies of Lewes and Georgetown. Then, he added, "If the men did their duty, what of the women? They, who would on a common occasion get frightened at a mouse, dropped, for the moment, the epithet of 'lady' and assumed the role of the 'heroine' and with hands blackened, and faces begrimed, worked with zest and zeal, in removing goods, carrying water, and lending a hand to anything that was needed." – *Milford Chronicle*

Another newspaper, *The Every Evening*, said this about the fire:

> "The women of the town took the lead in fighting the fire, and women of the best society jostled with the poorer class as they carried … water or wearily pulled on the handles of the fire pump. In many homes, the women climbed on the roofs and kept the roofs wet with water, and it was through their work that the fire was kept from spreading."

Joana Donovan, a retired teacher and principal in Salisbury, MD, and an adjunct professor of education at Salisbury University, is a frequent writer of local history and family history. She is the author of *It Began with a River - An Illustrated History of Milton* and *The Broadkill, Alexander Draper and his Descendants*, and *Donovans of Sussex County, Delaware*.

Photos compliments of the Milton Historical Society.

Information gathered from: *Milton's First Century 1807-1907* by Harold Hancock and Russell McCabe, and *It Began with a River - An Illustrated History of Milton and the Broadkill* by Joana S. Donovan.

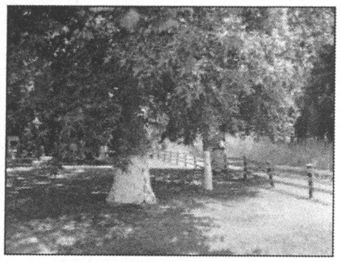
Growin' Up Country: Rural Life in the 1950s and 1960s

By J. Everett Moore Jr.

Foreword

In starting this project, my goal was simple … to give people a glimpse of what it was like growing up in rural America in the 1950s and 1960s.

It was a time of few divorces (I only knew of one divorced family while in elementary school) and our neighborhood was all WASP; there were few, if any, credit cards and no lawsuits. In fact, as a young child, I asked Mom what it meant to sue someone, and she responded that "it is something that good people do not do." It was also the time period that marked the beginning of the space race from Sputnik to Apollo 11's landing on the moon.



Many in rural areas painted trees, poles, and posts white . I am unaware of any practical purpose but was done for aesthetic reasons only. Photo by the author.

What did occur to me was the simpler time in which we lived. I think it is best stated in a eulogy I gave on February 10, 1994, at the death of Jimmie Truitt Sr. I stated:

> "When I think of Jimmie Truitt, I think of a way of life. To me he represented a simpler, easier-going time when everybody had time for everyone else. A time when people visited and talked. A time when there was plenty of room to roam, wander and hunt without disturbing others. A time when it was safe for kids to roam the neighborhood, knowing that the neighbors knew them and would care for them."

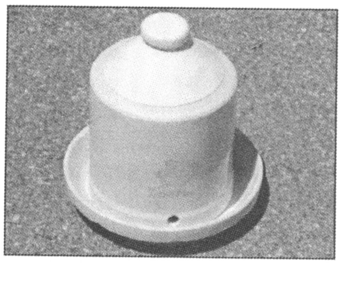
That is the world I knew as a child.

Home

I often have the opportunity to discuss my childhood. I refer to it as an *Ozzie and Harriet*-type childhood, but we didn't live in town and dad didn't wear a suit.

My earliest memories revolve around church and family. As more fully detailed later, the church played a large part in our life – Sunday school, preaching, MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship), Bible school, homecoming and ice cream festivals, all provided activities for our small close-knit community.

We lived on a dirt road, County Road No. 315, now called Deep Branch Road, east of Georgetown, in Sussex County, DE, in a two-story, three-bedroom, one-bath farmhouse. There was no central heat or air conditioning – in fact, I didn't know anyone with central heat or air. The house was heated by three space heaters downstairs with no heat upstairs. In the summer, we slept with the windows open and had a window fan to move the air. We were fortunate to have one air conditioner in the living room, and on extremely hot nights, I sometimes sneaked down and slept on the floor in the air-conditioned room. In the winter, we slept with plenty of handmade quilts for warmth. The quilts made us warm and toasty, but our feet moved quickly in the mornings when they touched the cold linoleum floor. We quickly scrambled downstairs to the heat.



Chicken crocks were used to water young chicks referred to as "biddies". The plate and the jug were 2 separate pieces and the jug was filled with water, the plate placed on top, and then flipped and put on the ground. By the time enough of these 1 gallon jugs were filled to water 42,500 biddies I was usually soaked. They are often seen around the Peninsula today as Americana decorative pieces. Photo by the author.

Some may have a romantic image of living on a dirt road, but it did have its drawbacks. Road graders periodically scraped the road to fill in the potholes and to fix the "washboard" surface of the road. During the winter freezes and thaws, the road became unstable and it was not unheard of for people to get stuck. Obviously, it was very messy during rainstorms or snowstorms. In the dry summers, dust came into the house with each passing car. The wash on the clotheslines also got dusty. The State Highway Department spread calcium on that section of the roads in front of houses to keep the dust down.

The area looked different then. Many of the grain fields we see now were pastures for beef and milk cows. The fields were smaller with hedgerows between the fields. Those hedgerows were perfect nesting places for a wide assortment of birds and small animals.

Most of the homes had chicken houses, barns and other farm buildings near the house. Most had gardens and many had chickens running loose in the yard. Some of the old timers did not have grass in their yards because the chickens or other animals kept the grass from growing. Others painted all the trees white up to a certain height – normally shoulder high. Those same families might have old tires half buried upright and painted white to outline the driveway or entrance to the yard.

After supper, families often visited their neighbors. There was no invitation or phone call in advance. Adults talked about the crops, the weather and the local or regional news while the children played. It was traditional for a snack to be served to the visitors. When we visited in the summer, we often sat on the front porch, usually on rockers. The quiet was occasionally interrupted by the small talk of the adults, the sound of the children (always referred to as "the kids") playing with the neighbor's dog or chasing fireflies (referred to as "lightning bugs") or the sound of the occasional passing car.

Even though we lived in the country and were somewhat isolated, we had more home deliveries than now. We had deliveries/salesmen from Stanley Products, TV repairmen, doctor visits (when we were sick), Joseph's Dairy (we left empty milk bottles on the step that were replaced by full bottles), dry cleaners and fish salesmen in season; and our neighbors even had bread delivered by the Bond Bread man.

For farm families, weekdays and Saturdays were no different unless you were of school age. Farming was not a nine-to-five, five-day-a-week job. Saturday was another workday.

Sundays, however, were special days. We

were taught to "remember the Sabbath and to keep it Holy." That meant no work, except what was required to tend to livestock. It was a day of worship, relaxation and being with family. Mom prohibited us from playing any card games, from sewing or even using scissors on Sundays. This did not seem unusual to us because everyone in our circle of friends and neighbors did the same.

Everything was saved and one made do with what one had. Dad's files needed handles so he used corncobs which were readily available. The Union Leader tobacco tin was used to store his line level. Photo by the author.

Recreation

Living in a sparsely populated area, our bikes were an important mode of transportation. They were the basic, single-speed bikes with a coaster brake. I never owned a bike with multiple speeds.

Often, I just jumped on my bike and took a ride with no specific destination in mind. Traffic was extremely light – many times I could ride to Wilson's Store without seeing a single car. In fact, I would often ride to the store without using my hands on the handlebars.

Every kid knew how to do basic bicycle repairs. We released the air in the tire to fix a pinched valve stem, straightened it and pumped it back up. If we had a hole in the tube, we removed the tire, made the patch and remounted the tire and were back in action. Likewise, we knew how to put a chain back on if it slipped off and how to tighten the chain. To make a bike sound like a motorcycle, kids taped baseball cards to the front fork positioned to hit the spokes. Others put raccoon tails in the ends of the rubber handgrips. If the handgrips came off, "black" or "tar" tape came to the rescue and we taped the handgrips. We did not take the bike to a repair shop. I don't even know if one existed, nor did we wait for an adult to fix these minor matters.

Work/Chores

Just as Mom kept us busy inside, Dad always managed to keep us busy with chores outside. Everybody was thrifty and recycled. When something was broken, it was fixed with whatever material was at hand. It was not thrown away. If one needed handles on files, one used corncobs. When buildings or structures were demolished, all the materials were saved for reuse – EVEN THE BENT NAILS. On more than one occasion, Merrill and I sat on a concrete block, using a hammer to straighten a bucket of nails that Dad had pulled out. Likewise, all bricks and blocks were recycled. We often spent time with a hammer, knocking off the old mortar so they could be reused.

[We were chicken farmers and every nine weeks or so] We had to get ready for a flock of chickens. We went through an intense preparation period.

First, we cleaned out manure from the previous flock. It was determined that the biddies obtained immunity by pecking in the litter of the previous flock, so we only cleaned out the wet or crusty areas. Just a few years prior, the custom was to clean out all the litter between every flock. Scoop shovels and manure forks were used. It was impossible not to get some dirt. Therefore, it was often necessary to replace dirt. Piles of fill dirt were dumped in the doors of the chicken house. The dirt was then spread by hand and shoveled in the areas needed.

After the dirt was spread, the sawdust used for litter was dumped in the doors. The sawdust was light and was spread by scoop shovels. This was spread to a 3" or 4" thickness over all the dirt.

After the dirt and the sawdust were spread, the gas brooder stoves were then cleaned, and we made sure they were in proper working order. We then placed paper under the stoves for the biddies and cleaned and filled the crocks for young chicks. The gallon crocks, often used nowadays as decoration or as lamp bases, were used to provide water. They were turned upside down to fill; the plate was then placed over the bottom and then flipped. Some water always came out and soaked the one doing this job.

The day before the biddies were delivered, the gas stoves would be turned on and the houses heated to over 90 degrees. The biddies were delivered from the hatchery on the day of their birth. They were delivered in boxes by trucks or converted school buses. Since it was important to get them under the heat as soon as possible, Dad and I helped the deliveryman unload and empty the boxes under the stoves. We then set the box tops around the stoves and sprinkled feed in them.

During the summers, weekends and holidays I helped "tend" the chickens. We had three chicken houses that housed a total 42,500 chickens. We raised four to five flocks per year, with each flock staying from nine to ten weeks before going to market. My chores depended on the age of the chickens.

During the first week, the care was intense. The crocks had to be filled daily with water, as were the box lids with feed. The heat had to be closely monitored. The heat could be 90 degrees in the house and below freezing outside.

After a week or so, we fell into the routine of feeding every other day, washing out drinkers (the crocks were replaced with hanging drinkers that automatically refilled) with a household broom and picking up the dead.

We tried to keep the mortality low; therefore, medicines were routinely mixed in the feed, which was delivered premixed, or were added to the water supply. The names of the diseases reminded one that Delaware was ground zero in production of poultry. The [poultry] diseases had such names as "New Castle" or "Gumboro." [Editor's note: Although New Castle and Gumboro are recognized as Delaware place names, the Newcastle after which the disease was named was actually Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom.]

We did not initially have automatic feeders. We had feed bins at the end of each house from which we could fill the feed cart. The cart was on a metal rail, and I pushed it to each "room" and filled the feeders. The feeders each held 25 pounds of feed. I was fortunate because not many years before, feed was delivered to and stored in feed rooms in the chicken houses in 100-pound bags. There was normally one feed room per chicken house.

During this same time period, we did traditional farming of corn and soybeans. We had a Case 800 tractor that pulled a four-bottom plow, a WD45 Allis Chalmers Tractor that pulled a three-bottom plow and a Farmall H Tractor that we used for utility purposes.

Moore, a Sussex County attorney, excerpted this article from his book *Growin' Up Country: Rural Life in the 1950s and 1960s*. The book was first published in 2012 and a second printing was completed in April 2013. To receive further information, e-mail jemoore@mooreandrutt.com or visit www.growinupcountry.com.

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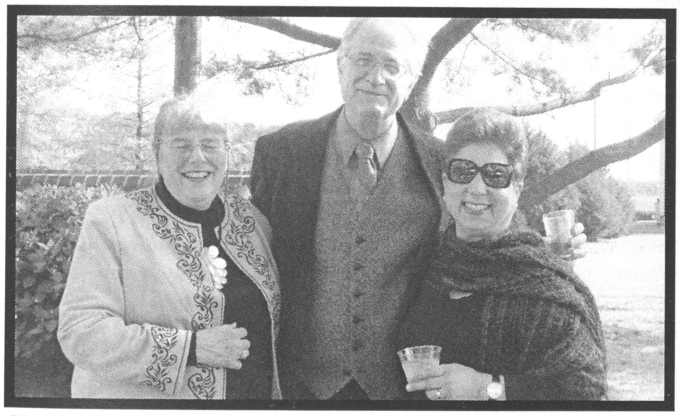

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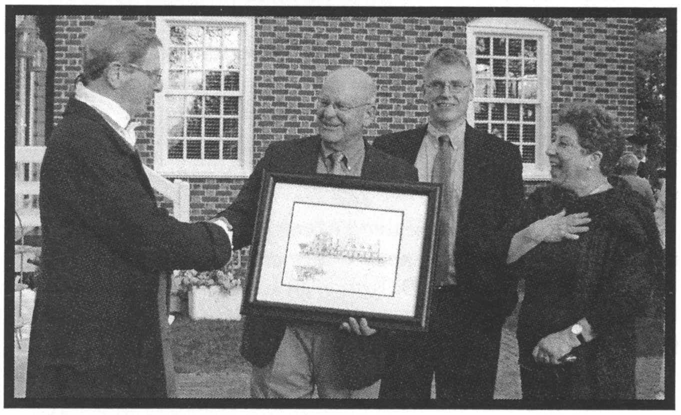

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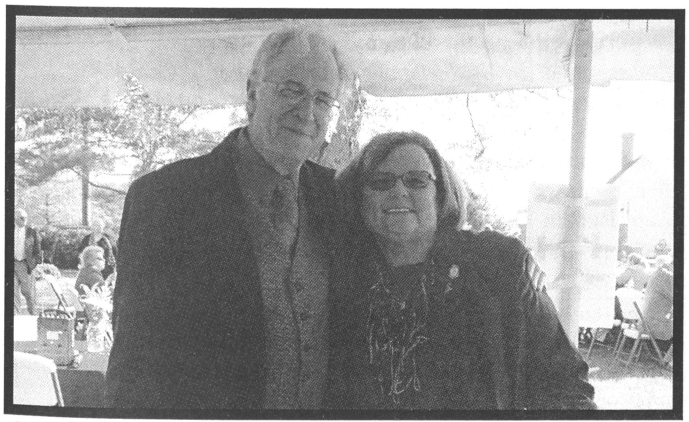

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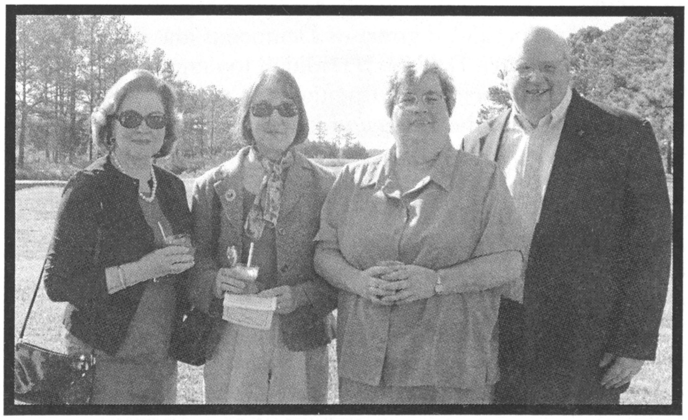

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Return Day

By Cathy Hudson and Mary Carver

Burying of the Hatchet. Photo from Delaware Public Archives Blog.

Although the official date of the original Return Day is unknown – it may have been as early as 1792 – the celebration has not diminished. In 1791, the county seat of Sussex was moved from the coastal town of Lewes to the more centrally located Georgetown in order to relieve the burden of voters from the western side of Sussex. The law mandated that all votes be cast in the county seat on Election Day. Two days later, the voters would return to hear the results. The festival that occurred is referred to as Return Day.

In 1811, the legislature established voting districts in each of the hundreds; the sheriff presided over the Board of Canvassers, who met in Georgetown to count and announce the final returns. As many as two to three thousand people gathered for the festive occasion.

Sussex folks from every part of the county and residents from nearby areas in Maryland would arrive by early morning to observe Return Day. Many traveled by horseback, coach, carriage, farm wagons or gigs, while others arrived on foot. Reportedly, some of the vehicles were decorated with brightly colored streamers and flags. Sussex Countians would provide an abundance of food for the day. Temporary booths and stands were built near the courthouse for treats such as rabbit, opossum, fish, oysters, Delaware biscuits and, of course, corn pone. A court bailiff would stand in the balcony of the old courthouse, located on the Circle of Georgetown, addressing the politicians and spectators who were anxiously awaiting the election returns. Finally, the bailiff would cry out the election results to the surrounding crowd.

Return Day has continued from the 1800s to the present day, with the 200th-year anniversary celebrated last November. In 1936, when Franklin D. Roosevelt won by a landslide and the Democrats carried the state vote for the first time in many years, the celebration was surprisingly large. In 1942, Return Day was cancelled due to World War II. Due to modern inventions, such as automobiles and radio, election results began to be shared much more quickly, which resulted in a decreased interest in the event.

However, in 1952, a group of Democrats and Republicans decided that Return Day was a tradition too important to disappear. Consequently, the tradition was revived. Interest skyrocketed during the 1950s and 1960s. By 1965, Delaware state legislators passed a law cementing Return Day as a legal half-day holiday for all employees who lived or worked in Sussex County. This was welcomed by many college students who previously had been forced to cut class in order to return home for the celebration. Since this transition, the event continues to grow.

In February 2000, then U.S. Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr., nominated Return Day for the Library of Congress' Local Legacies Bicentennial Celebration Project. As a result, much memorabilia has been sent to the Library of Congress to contribute to the American Folklife Center's collection.

The early customs of Return Day persist, while many new features have been added. The actual celebration still begins early the Thursday morning following the Tuesday election, marking the official end of the Delaware campaign. The crowd surrounding the new courthouse – which maintains its location on the Circle of Georgetown – cheers for the town crier as though the results are being heard for the first time. The ceremonial act of political leaders "burying of the hatchet" remains a valued tradition. The hatchet is buried in a box of sand taken from the Lewes beach, the location of the original county seat. Vendors continue to line the streets in booths, stands and trailers selling food, arts and crafts, clothing, jewelry, and just about anything imaginable. In fact, some of the vendors now begin arriving as early as Monday evening. On Thursday, during the 1:30 p.m. parade, opposing candidates preserve the tradition of riding in the same horse-drawn carriage or vehicle. There have been few exceptions to this practice; for example, former U.S. Senator William V. Roth Jr. was known for walking the entire parade route accompanied by his wife, their children and, of course, their well-known St. Bernard.

Changes have transpired over the years to accommodate a larger celebration. Late Wednesday morning, an ox is placed on the spit for overnight roasting in preparation for the free sandwiches given out to the crowds on Thursday afternoon. By Wednesday evening, the pre-celebration begins with music provided by local bands for the street dance. Although the music officially stops around 11p.m., many people continue to celebrate the history-laden event.

Contemporary additions to the festivities include the Mayor's Hatchet Toss, the Horseshoe Competition and the Cupcake Contest. Since parking has become problematic, free transportation is now provided from Delaware Technical and Community College, Owens Campus branch, to the site of the Return Day activities. Now it is not uncommon to see vehicles with license plates from far-reaching locations at the festival. This is perhaps due to the national media coverage it has received, such as on *Good Morning America* in 2000. Crowds have grown from two to three thousand in 1811 to 20 to 30 thousand today.

The event takes place every two years, regardless of the weather. So mark your calendars, and join us in 2014 to help celebrate Return Day! Dress warmly, wear comfortable walking shoes and prepare for a fun-filled day with the Sussex County community!

Cathy Hudson is a Sussex County native and a volunteer at the Nabb Research Center. Mary Carver is a senior at Salisbury University working as an English intern at Nabb. Thanks to the Web sites returnday.org and marvelmuseum.com for the information used in this article.

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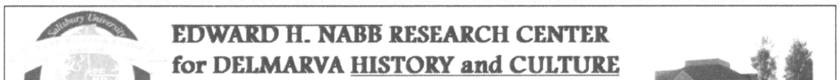

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